

GANDHIJI IN ENGLAND

AND THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND
ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE



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PREFACE

POLITICAL developments in India during the last few years will form a distinct landmark in the growth of the Indian constitution. Whatever be the form of the future constitution and whatever the influence of events in the recent past on the course of political progress, it will be admitted on all hands, and it will be realised by the future historian, that the Second Round Table Conference has largely supplied the material for the edifice of the future constitution. It may be that the structure will not be completed in the immediate future, nonetheless, the material afforded by the discussions at the Round Table and the draft reports of the various committees will be considered valuable.

The period from the Delhi Pact to the conclusion of the discussions at the Second Round Table has been one of comparative quiet and of solid work. The first few months from the first week of March, when the Pact was signed, to the arrival of Gandhiji in England were crowded partly with events causing anxiety to those who wished that the truce should lead to peace and partly with events centering round Gandhiji and his activities; during the period from September to the end of December all eyes were turned on St. Jame's Palace where the representatives of India including the sole delegate of the organisation, which had not till then participated in the discussions on the revision of the constitution, the Princes and the representatives of the British Government were met together discussing various aspects of a workable constitution.

The thorny problems with which the nation is confronted were discussed in detail and the draft reports of the various committees are documents of indisputable value in that they embody the opinions of many who had given the best consideration to the subjects and who, in spite of differences, strove to reach a common understanding. More than that, as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said in his parting speech at the Plenary Session of the Conference "the personal contact among the delegates and the heart to heart discussions were of the highest value." It cannot be denied that the proceedings reveal acute differences of opinion on certain aspects of the constitutional problem; they show a wide gulf dividing a certain section of the Indian delegates from the representatives of the British Government on the problem of defence and a few other aspects of the future constitution. But the discussion "raised the problem of Indian constitutional reform far above the mere technicalities of constitution-making for, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald observed, "we have won that confidence in and respect for each other which has made the task one of helpful political co-operation".

This volume aims at giving a comprehensive account of the proceedings of the Conference with copious extracts from the speeches of various delegates and of the representatives of the Government. And inasmuch as a large section of the British public evinced a keen interest in Gandhiji, who had not taken part in the previous session of the Conference, and the British statesmen themselves gave prominence to him at the Round Table we have made the account fairly exhaustive by including reference to Gandhiji and his activities in

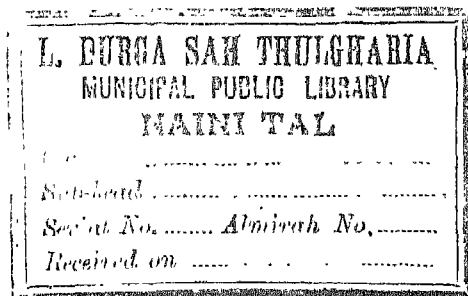
England. However, our chief aim has been to make it a handbook for students of the Indian constitution and for those who might consider the Second Round Table Conference as forming the basis for building the future constitution.

No goal worth striving for is reached by a straight road or one free from obstacles. Even the sunniest day is at times preceded by a cloudy night; an optimist can yet visualise the gleam of a bright day. And we pray with the Premier of the British Empire that suddenly and even generally unexpectedly the way will smooth itself out and the end happily reached.

We have to express our indebtedness to various journals and newspapers particularly the "Hindu" from which we have taken extracts.

The Publishers

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
PUBLISHERS' PREFACE ..	iii
I. A SURVEY OF THE PAST ..	1
II. THE TRUCE AND AFTER ..	7
III. THE COMMUNAL TANGLE ..	9
IV. IMPLEMENTING THE PACT ..	12
V. THE VOYAGE ..	28
VI. THE FIRST BATCH IN LONDON ..	33
VII. THE RECEPTION ..	38
VIII. THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE ..	43
IX. THE FEDERAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ..	72
X. THE MINORITIES SUB-COMMITTEE ..	80
XI. THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE (CONTD.) ..	95
XII. ARMY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS ..	108
XIII. COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION ..	125
XIV. THE PLENARY SESSION ..	145
XV. PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY ..	170
XVI. DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT ..	175
XVII. THE LORDS' DEBATE ..	178
XVIII. THE STATES' PEOPLES' DELEGATION ..	181
XIX. THE CURRENCY QUESTION ..	184
XX. GANDHIJI'S OTHER ACTIVITIES ..	187
XXI. GANDHIJI'S RETURN ..	192
APPENDIX.	
I. TRUCE TERMS ..	202
II. GANDHIJI'S SPEECH ..	210
III. MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD'S SPEECH ..	226

DELEGATES OF THE SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

BRITISH DELEGATION

The Right Hon'ble J. Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister.

The Right Hon'ble Lord Sankey, Lord Chancellor.

The Right Hon'ble Wedgwood Benn, M.P., Secretary of State for India.

The Right Hon'ble Arthur Henderson, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon'ble J. H. Thomas, M. P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon'ble the Earl Peel.

The Right Hon'ble the Marquis of Zetland.

The Hon'ble Mr. Oliver Stanley, M. P.

The Right Hon'ble Sir Samuel Hoare, M.P.

The Right Hon'ble the Marquis of Reading.

The Marquis of Lothian

Sir Rober Hamilton, M.P.

Mr. Issac Foot, M. P.

INDIAN STATES' DELEGATION

H. H. the Maharaja of Alwar.

H. H. the Maharaja of Baroda.

H. H. the Nawab of Bhopal.

H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner.

H. H. the Maharaja Rana of Dholnur.

H. H. the Maharaja of Kashmir.

H. H. the Maharaja of Navnagar.

H. H. the Maharaja of Patiala.

H. H. the Maharaja of Rewa.

H. H. the Chief of Sangli.

The Raja of Korea.

The Raja of Sarila.

Sir Prabha Shanker Pattani.

Sir Manubhai Mehta.

Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan.

Nawab Sir Mahomed Akbar Hydari.

Sir Mirza Mahomed Ismail.

Dewan Bahadru T. Ragaviah Pantulu Garu.

Colonel K. N. Haksar.

DELEGATES FROM BRITISH INDIA

H. H. the Aga Khan.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum Khan.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar.

Sir Saiyid Ali Imam.

Dr. Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar.

Mr. U. Ba Pe.

Srijut Chandradhar Barooah.

Mr. J. N. Basu.

Mr. E. C. Benthall.

Sir Shah Nawaz Khan Bhutto.

Rai Bahadur Kunwar Bisheswar Dayal Seth.

Sir Hubert Carr.

Mr. C. Y. Chintamani.

Sir Maneekji Dadabhoy.

Maharajadhiraj Kameshwara Singh of Darbhanga.

Mr. Shafi Daoodi.

Dr. S. K. Datta.

Sir O. De Glanville.

Mr. Fazlul Huq.

Mr. M. K. Gandhi.

Mr. M. M. Ohn Ghin.
 Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi.
 Sir Gulam Hussain Hidayatullah.
 Lt.-Col. Sir Henry Gidney.
 Sir Padamji Ginwala.
 Mr. V. V. Giri.
 Khan Bahadur Hafiz Hidayat Hussain.
 Sir Muhammad Iqbal.
 Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar.
 Mr. B. V. Jadhav.
 Mr. M. R. Jayakar.
 Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Junior).
 Mr. M. A. Jinnah.
 Mr. T. F. Gavin Jones.
 Mr. N. M. Joshi.
 Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.
 Sir Sayed Muhammad Mehr Shab.
 The Hon'ble Sir Provash Chunder Mitter.
 Mr. H. P. Mody.
 Dr. B. S. Moonji.
 Dewan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar.
 The Hon'ble Captain Nawab Sir Muhammad Ahmed Sayad Khan, Nawab of Chatari.
 Sir Mahomed Shafi.
 Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.
 Raja Narendranath.
 Dr. Narendranath, Law.
 The Hon'ble Sayid Muhammad Padshah.

Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam.
 Raja Sri Sri Sri Krishna Chandra Gajapati Narayana Deo, Raja of Parlakimedi.
 Rao Bahadur Sir A. Parasuramdas Patro.
 Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao.
 Sardar Sampuran Singh.
 Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.
 The Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri.
 Sir Chimanlal Setalvad.
 Sir Pheroze Serhna.
 Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan.
 Mrs. Shah Nawaz.
 Maulana Shaukat Ali.
 Captain Raja Sher Muhammad Khan of Domeli.
 Mr. B. Shiva Rao.
 Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan.
 Sir Purushotamdas Thakurdas.
 Mr. G. D. Birla.
 Mr. Jammal Mahommed.
 Mrs. Subbaroyan.
 Sir Saiyid Sultan Ahmad.
 Sir Shripad Balwant Tambe.
 Mr. Us Aung Thin.
 Sir Purshothamdas Thakurdas.
 Sardar Sahib Sardar Ujjal Singh.
 Mr. C. E. Wood.
 Mr. Zafarullah Khan.

GANDHIJI IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF THE PAST

THE stirring events of the past few years in India are too well-known to need recapitulation. Yet in order to clothe the aim and scope with which we set out on this work with a completeness of detail, we will briefly state them here.

The Simon Commission

In accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919, H. E. the Viceroy, Lord Irwin announced on 9th November 1927, the appointment of a Commission by His Majesty's Government under the Chairmanship of Sir John Simon, to enquire into the fitness or otherwise of India for the next stage of constitutional advance as contemplated in the Act. The announcement fell flat on the Indian public and did not evoke the least response thereto. Moderates and Extremists, Congressmen and Home Rulers, representatives of other interests and independent public men resolved with one voice to boycott the proposed Commission for the reason that it was an all-white one and not a single seat was allotted on it to a representative Indian. This grave defect in the constitution of the Commission was taken as a direct insult to the people of India and the consequent boycott programme was so wholeheartedly organised and thoroughly executed that the enormous labours of the Commission was reduced in the eyes of the world to a mere waste.

Lord Birkenhead's Challenge

Meanwhile, Lord Birkenhead, the then Secretary of State for India, in the course of a speech in the House of Lords had addressed a challenge to the leaders of public opinion in India to produce by common consent among themselves any scheme of political advance for consideration of the British Parliament.

This challenge was seriously taken up by the Madras Congress in 1927, which authorised its working committee to convene a conference of all the political parties in India with a view to draw up a constitution based on the maximum amount of agreement arrived at therein. The result was, the All-Parties Conference and the Nehru-Report which has since become a classic document in the political history of India. The Nehru-Report proposed a full Dominion constitution for India with responsibility at the centre and in the provinces and it carried the consent of the major part of political opinion in the country.

The Congress Goal

The Madras Congress had also passed a resolution declaring that complete independence was the goal of India. When the Congress met again, in Calcutta in December 1928, it was found to be divided into two definite groups, the one for re-affirming the complete independence resolution of the previous year while the other for adoption of the Nehru-Report as the basis of their demand. The "complete independence" group was, apparently the stronger of the two.

At this stage, Mahatma Gandhi stepped in and used his powerful influence to ask the Congress to accept the Nehru-Report and as a compromise with the "complete

independence" group, he proposed that a time-limit of one year be fixed to see if the Government will show any sign of willingness to fall in line with the united demands of the people and he carried the day.

A Critical Year

The year passed on with various vicissitudes in the political arena of the country. There were prosecutions for sedition and imprisonments on one side and meetings of leaders among themselves and with the Viceroy on the other. In the meanwhile, the general elections in England resulted in a majority for the Labourites, who came into power. They showed a keen interest in the political developments in India and constant correspondence on the subject was carried on between the new Secretary of State for India, Mr. Wedgewood Benn and the Viceroy. The Viceroy proceeded to England to have personal consultation with the Cabinet on important matters connected with India and his return was anxiously awaited in the country.

After an absence of more than four months, the Viceroy returned and his first announcement in a Gazette Extraordinary issued on 31st October, 1929 affirmed that "Dominion Status" was to be the goal of India. Beyond this, there was nothing definite in the announcement except perhaps the proposal of His Majesty's Government to convene as early as possible a conference of representative Indians and the British Government to discuss and decide in detail some plan of settlement of the various Indian questions for submission to Parliament.

Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress circles thought that this announcement was too vague and demanded a definite declaration on the part of the Government

that the matter to be discussed at the Round Table Conference shall be not when "Dominion Status" was to be granted to India, but, the form and constitution of "Dominion Status" which must be immediately granted to India. Conferences and conversations followed and on November 23rd, after a final conference of leaders with the Viceroy at Delhi, who expressed inability to give a definite answer to the Congress demands, the hopes of the Congress were shattered and definite parting of ways announced.

But the moderate elements in the country declared that they had reason to hope in the Viceroy's announcement and further assurances and decided to utilise the chance offered by the Round Table Conference.

The Lahore Congress

In 1929, the Indian National Congress was held at Lahore under the presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and after considering the Viceroy's pronouncement, decided that nothing was to be gained by the Congress participating in the proposed Round Table Conference. The Congress further re-affirmed its ideal of complete independence passed at Madras by which, the Nehru-Report, till then valid for one year, automatically lapsed. This Congress, in pursuance of its resolution, called upon all Congressmen to boycott the legislatures, both central and provincial and all local bodies and to carry on the constructive programme of the Congress. It also authorised the Congress Working Committee to launch whenever and wherever it deemed fit a campaign of mass civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes.

The Year 1930

Henceforth, the march of events was both quick and grave. The 26th of January was declared as the "independence day", in all-India. Congressmen resigned their seats in the legislatures and other public bodies. An intensive campaign of foreign cloth boycott was organised and Mahatma Gandhi proposed first to break the salt laws in the campaign of mass civil disobedience. On the 2nd March, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi wrote a long letter to the Viceroy which was in the form of an ultimatum. The reply he received from the Viceroy and what happened afterwards are too recent events for us to mention in detail.

The Historic March

On the 12th March, 1930, Gandhiji set out on his historic march to Dandi to break the salt laws. He reached Dandi on the 5th April and immediately set to work out his programme. The Government and a large body of public men in the country did not at first gauge the strength of Mahatmaji's purpose and the country's overwhelming faith in him. But soon they were disillusioned. The whole country took up the programme from one end to the other and His Majesty's prisons were filled with Satyagrahis. At first Mahatmaji was not arrested, nor his activities interfered with in any way. But soon they found out their error. On the night of the 5th of May he was arrested and taken to Yerawadda jail. But, the movement had already spread and taken strong root in all parts of the country.

The war of truth and non-violence was waged with unabated vigour and the entire armoury of the Government was brought into use to combat it. Arrests and

prosecutions, imprisonments, confiscations of property, a series of ordinances, all these were utilised to the utmost, but the situation did not show signs of improvement.

The R. T. C

In the meantime the Round Table Conference was opened in London on the 12th November, by H. M. the King and presided over by the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. As the proceedings of the conference went on, it was more and more evident that the non-participation of the Congress in it was a serious drawback to its success. The Cabinet in England as well as the Viceroy in India were anxious to stop the civil disobedience movement and bring the Congress to participate in the Round Table Conference.

Negotiations

Negotiations were set afoot, and at first Mr. George Slocombe, *The Daily Herald* representative and then Mr. Brailsford made attempts in their own way to ascertain the views of the Congress with regard to a settlement. The Rt. Hon. Mr. V. S. S. Sastri, Sir T. B. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, after their return from England, took up the thread of negotiations and carried it forward. By their efforts a meeting of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, who were both in Naini jail and Mahatma Gandhi was brought about at Yerrawadda jail and the leaders were given an opportunity to discuss among themselves the terms under which they were prepared to accept a truce. By the good offices and untiring efforts of the above-named gentlemen, the Viceroy ordered the release on 26th January of all Congress leaders from prison, so

that the Working Committee may meet and discuss the truce terms. The other Satyagraha prisoners were released later on and the special enactments withdrawn one by one.

The negotiations were carried on with various vicissitudes till the 28th February, 1931, when finally an agreement was reached between Mahatma Gandhi on behalf of the Congress and H. E. Lord Irwin, on behalf of the Government. The terms of the truce may be seen in the Appendix.

CHAPTER II

THE TRUCE AND AFTER

THE truce was signed. The nation heaved a sigh of relief. The suffering and sacrifice of the people for twelve long and weary months had borne fruit. The Government of India had for the first time come to recognise the moral force behind the political movement and unmindful of its prestige, condescended to treat with the Congress on equal terms. Mutual trust and goodwill prevailed. Concessions were given and taken on both sides. A supreme act of faith was sealed by two great personalities belonging to the two great nations.

A second Round Table Conference was to be arranged in which Mahatma Gandhi had agreed to take part. All went well and hope shined at its best. There was jubilation everywhere. What more was wanted?

Conditions of Truce

But the signing of the agreement cannot by itself establish the conditions of truce. More is needed. The entire nation on the one hand and the provincial governments on the other, had to accept the moral binding

of the pact and conscientiously give effect to it. Mahatmaji advised the Congress and through it, the country, to respect the pact and the Viceroy addressed the provincial governments likewise to give effect to its terms. But here was the rub. Complaints arose from all provinces that executive authorities were not wholeheartedly giving effect to the truce terms. Consequently allegations and repudiations, an immense amount of correspondence, a number of interviews, statements and counter-statements ensued and the whole tangle had to be very carefully handled and wisely adjusted, before Mahatmaji could be enabled to proceed to London. Better faith and wiser counsels prevailed again and this time it was H. E. Lord Willingdon, who earned the credit of squaring up matters satisfactorily, so that Mahatmaji was eventually persuaded to go to London.

Another factor which was of the utmost importance, if the second Round Table Conference was to be made a success, was, the attainment of communal harmony, without which no amount of goodwill between Britain and India would in the least avail. And Mahatmaji strained his utmost nerve to exploit all the possible avenues by which at least a temporary unity could be achieved, so that the Indian delegation in England could boast of a united front, thus making it impossible for the British Government to dally with or postpone the Indian demands. How far he succeeded in his efforts will be seen as we go on.

CHAPTER III

THE COMMUNAL TANGLE

ON the 16th of March, 1931, the council of the All-India Muslim League met at Delhi and passed a resolution declaring that they required 33 1/3 per cent. representation in the Federal Legislature; the weightage which they enjoyed in the provinces were to be maintained as at present; Sind should be separated and made into a province and that North-West Frontier Province should be placed on the same footing of a Governor's province with respective legislative and administrative machinery. Special safeguards should be provided for the protection of their culture and religion. This decision on the part of the premier Muslim organisation in the country gave rise to considerable controversy in the press and the Hindu and Sikh organisations began likewise to formulate their respective demands. Communalism became the order of the day and common nationalism was lost in a maze of communal tangle. Each community viewed the future from its particular vantage ground so that to evolve a common formula became almost an impossibility. National leaders sought to make up the differences for which they left no stone unturned.

Different Viewpoints

On the 20th March, a deputation of Hindus and another of Sikhs met Gandhiji at Delhi, at which they presented their minimum demands and also made alternative proposals. The Muslims on the other hand were divided into three groups, one under Sir Mahomed Iqbal, who demanded separate electorates; the other under Dr. Ansari, who would accept nothing but joint electo-

rates; and the third group headed by Maulana Shaukat Ali who were for sticking fast to the Delhi Conference resolutions.

Cawnpore

Events were moving quickly and negotiations were proceeding apace, when suddenly they had to cry halt. Communal riots of a terrible nature began at Cawnpore and continued for days at a stretch. This gave rise to a recrudescence of communal bitterness on both sides which no amount of exertion by leaders could pacify. Eventually the riots stopped partly of their own accord and partly by the exertion of the authorities, but after carrying away a heavy toll both of lives and property. The life of one of the most selfless patriots of India, Pandit Ganesh Shunker Vidyarthi was sacrificed during the unfortunate riots at the altar of the motherland. His death was equally mourned by both the communities.

Communal Negotiations

Negotiations for a communal settlement began afresh, but it was soon found out that the differences among the Muslims were more fundamental than at first imagined. The vital issue which emerged out of the discussions, was about the electorates and two parties stood out prominently, the one demanding separate electorates and the other advocating joint electorates.

On April 4th Mahatma Gandhi met Maulana Shaukat Ali at Delhi and discussed the situation. He then conferred with the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference, but the situation remained the same. Nationalist Muslims met at various places only to reiterate their decision to have nothing but joint electorates. The good offices of H. H. The Aga Khan and

also of H. E. Lord Irwin were exerted towards arriving at a common formula acceptable to all parties concerned, but were defeated in their aim, while Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to advise the Congress to accede to all the demands of the Muslims, provided they were unanimous.

Bhopal's Efforts

The office of peace-maker was then taken up by H. H. the Nawab of Bhopal, at whose residence the conversations were continued. Prominent Muslim leaders were invited and every possible mode of settlement was attempted. At one time in the course of the discussions it appeared as if a settlement was sealed, but, that hope was quickly dispelled by a statement from Sir Mahomed Iqbal issued on 16th May, that no decision was arrived at. The settlement hoped for, was, that of a mixed electorate both joint and separate to be in force for a decade after which, joint electorates were to be made the general rule. But it was afterwards learnt that such a system was proposed but was left undecided till the opinion of the Working Committees of all the Muslim political organisations in the country were known.

Simla Conversations

The conversations were afterwards resumed at Simla, but still without arriving at a tangible result. It was feared that Mahatma Gandhi might decline to proceed to London without carrying a communal solution with him. But Lord Irwin had already persuaded Mahatmaji to proceed to London at any cost. It was also believed that the London atmosphere might prove more favourable for a communal settlement. Still, Mahatmaji's proceeding to London became doubtful for yet another reason.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTING THE PACT

WE have already noticed that various complaints were received at Congress head-quarters from provinces, alleging non-fulfilment of truce terms by local authorities. The first and foremost of which was the non-release of political prisoners whom the Congress claimed as their own, (following the non-violent cult). The authorities alleged in some cases, offences leaning towards violence and in other cases, various other reasons for not releasing those political prisoners. Mahatmaji interviewed the Viceroy in this connection as early as March 19th and after placing him in full possession of facts obtained a somewhat satisfactory result.

Question of Safeguards

The next to draw Mahatmaji's attention were certain references made by Mr. Wedgewood Benn and Lord Sankey in Parliament that the safeguards proposed during the transitional period were to be both in India's own and British interests. Mahatmaji objected to this mode of explanation and asserted that it was expressly stated in the terms of the truce that the proposed safeguards were to be solely in India's own interests.

Local Governments and Truce

Then there were complaints of local interference of authorities against peaceful picketing, which was allowed according to the terms of the Delhi pact; of non-return of property confiscated during the civil disobe-

dience movement; of patels and village officers who resigned their posts or were discharged in consequence of the movement not having been reinstated; of students refused admission to colleges and lawyers to practise again in courts; of harsh treatment meted out to Congressmen and Khudai Kitmatgars (Khan Abdul Gafur Khan's followers) in the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province and of forcible eviction of tenants in the United Provinces.

Bardoli

But the most important thing which moved Mahatmaji and the Congress leaders to such an extent as to make his chances of going to London very remote, was the alleged use of coercive measures in collecting land revenue in Bardoli Taluka. After the signing of the Delhi pact, the Congress leaders persuaded the peasants to pay up the land revenue which was till then withheld, and also helped the authorities in its collection. The peasants obeying the mandate of the Congress, paid up what they could and left a certain amount in arrears. Government had, according to the pact, agreed to remit the arrears of revenue in the case of those peasants who were genuinely willing but were unable to pay. But who was the authority to decide as to the ability or otherwise of the peasants to pay full revenue? The Government of Bombay claimed that the Collector of the district was the sole judge on such matters. The Congress leaders inasmuch as they were responsible for the truce and had persuaded the peasants to pay up the revenue and assisted in its collection, wanted a say in the matter.

When Mahatmaji heard complaints that coercive measures were being used to realize the arrears of re-

venue, he hastened to the Collector of Surat for redress. He put himself in communication with the Divisional Commissioner as well as with the Bombay Government on the subject. The final reply received by him from the Bombay Government on the 10th of August upset all his expectations and the matter being considered by the Congress Working Committee, it was resolved that the Congress should withdraw from participation in the Round Table Conference.

Communications with Government

Mahatma Gandhi had been from the very beginning of the truce in communication with the Government of India on the subject of specific lapses on the part of provincial governments in implementing the pact. The Government of India, though heartily in agreement with Mahatmaji in the belief that the truce terms must be worked out in a spirit of mutual trust and goodwill, had placed more reliance on the willingness of local authorities to do so, than the Congress had reason to suspect. H. E. Lord Willingdon in the course of a letter addressed to Mahatmaji dated 31st July says:

"I have of course taken a personal interest in everything pertaining to the settlement, and shall continue to do so, and in particular in regard to the list of alleged breaches of the settlement about which we await reports from the local Governments. I know that, in the provinces, the Governors similarly take a personal interest in matters connected with the settlement and you can rest assured that there will be no disposition to treat allegations of breaches of it other than as matters of importance."

Arbitration Board

But Mahatmaji has been since as early as 14th June, suggesting the establishment of a board of arbi-

tration "to decide about questions of interpretation of the settlement and as to the fully carrying out of the terms by one party or the other". In a subsequent communication addressed to Mr. Emerson, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, he suggests that the proposed Board of Enquiry may consist of "a Government nominee and a Congress representative". Mr. Emerson, in his reply to the above communication, as well as to the subsequent ones, laid stress on the impossibility of creating such a tribunal, as it would interfere with the ordinary course of administrative routine. He however assured Mahatmaji that specific cases of breaches of the pact would receive prompt and sympathetic attention at the hands of the Government of India and the local Governments. Mahatmaji did not press the point further, but clearly showed his anxiety to avoid a hitch as far as it may be possible and expressed the hope that the disputed questions may be settled without reference to any tribunal at all.

Sir E. Hotson's Reply

While matters were thus satisfactorily proceeding, the reply of Sir E. Hotson, the acting Governor of Bombay, precipitated the crisis and prompted the Congress Working Committee to vote for the withdrawal of the Congress from the Round Table Conference. Sir Earnest Hotson in the course of his reply dated 10th August, denies in the first place any breach of pact on the part of the authorities; that the authority to decide on the question of the ability of peasants to pay up the revenue, was the Collector of the district; that "the prompt response of the revenue payers to the Government measures showed that there were many persons able to pay who had not done so." The Congress leaders on

the spot asserted that the peasants paid the arrears under *duress* by borrowing. This reply of the Bombay Government made the Congress leaders feel all the more, the need for an impartial board of enquiry, especially into the question of the ability of the peasants of Bardoli to pay revenue.

Working Committee's Decision

The Congress Working Committee's decision withdrawing participation in the Round Table Conference spread throughout the country and created much uneasiness. Sir T. B. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar who were on the eve of their voyage to England to attend the second Round Table Conference, rushed to "Mani Bhuvan" along with Pandit Malaviyaji from Allahabad to see if any eleventh hour efforts at peace could avail. They had a long conversation with Mahatmaji and in the end telephoned to the Viceroy to re-open negotiations inasmuch as Mahatmaji had on their representation waived his claim for a tribunal of enquiry but would be content with the appointment of a Judge of the High Court, able to command the confidence of both the public and the Government, to enquire into the question of the Bardoli peasants.

Gandhiji writing in the "*Navajivan*" regarding the Congress working Committee's decision, says :

"All believed that I would start for London on the 15th. Many here, in England and in other parts of the world were anxious that I should proceed to London, but God's will will be done."

"I see the hand of God in the reply of His Excellency the Viceroy. This much, however, I can say with certainty. that I had employed, by thought, word and deed, all the means which a human being could employ for ensuring my participation in

the Round Table Conference. Still if I have not been able to go to London, I firmly believe the interest of India lies in it.

"I for myself do not distinguish between British politicians and Indian Civilians; and if for securing justice here in small matters, all energies have to be spent, and even then sometimes justice is not secured, it is impossible to expect justice in England in the so-called big affairs. Experiences obtained here is the echo of what is going to happen in England. If this view-point is correct, it was proper for me not to go to London as the representative of the Congress; but responsibility on the shoulders of the people has thereby increased. People have to do greater work now."

Peace or War ?

Interviewed in connection with the press report that Congress was fast preparing for war, Mahatmaji said:—

"This is a deliberate lie. No such instructions have been issued. Instructions have been issued all over the country that the Delhi Pact should be carried out, and that nobody should disobey any Government order without permission from Headquarters. I know the Congress Working Committee is anxious to carry out the Delhi Pact honourably, but if the Provincial Governments goad us, we shall have to take defensive measures. I have gathered ample evidence to prove that the goading has already begun."

The fortnight following the decision of the Congress Working Committee was the most critical period after the signing of the truce. The entire press both in India and England and the leaders of public opinion deplored with one voice the unfortunate decision. The first batch of delegates to the Round Table Conference including Sir T. B. Saprú, Messrs. Jayakar and A. Rangaswami Aiyengar had sailed by the S. S. "*Mooltan*". They had expressed the conviction that without Mahat-

maji's participation the Conference would be futile, but at the same time hoped that he would be persuaded to sail by the next boat in view of further negotiations set afoot with the Viceroy by Sir Sapru. Though Pandit Malaviyaji and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu had cancelled their passage, the situation was not without hope.

Government circles in Simla also showed themselves very much alive to the situation as it was apparent from the frequent meetings of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Though the publication of his correspondence with the Government and his charge-sheet by Mahatmaji, was at first considered precipitate, closing the door on further negotiations, subsequent events at Simla proved that this was not the case. The Government of India contented themselves with merely publishing the replies of the local Governments and their threat to publish a counter charge-sheet on the lapses of the Congress, did not materialise at the time as in the meanwhile further developments in the negotiations ensued auguring hopes of a peaceful settlement.

Viceroy's Reply

By the 22nd of August the situation improved sufficiently as to make hope almost a certainty. The Viceroy returned from Calcutta cancelling his further programme and Sir James Crerar as also Sir Fazli Hussain from Kandaghat. A meeting of the Executive Council was held immediately after the return of the Viceroy at which, Mahatmaji's request for a personal interview with the Viceroy to clear up matters was discussed and decided in the affirmative. Telephonic message was despatched to Mahatmaji at Ahmedabad intimating him of the Viceroy's decision.

In a statement to the Associated Press regarding the Viceroy's reply, Mahatmaji said:—"I do not consider the Viceroy's reply to be at all bad or disappointing. In fact I was prepared for some such reply. Gandhiji added,

"I am glad too that, so far as I can understand the letter, the Government do not intend to terminate the Settlement and as the public is well aware, the Working Committee of the Congress has already passed a resolution to that effect. I am therefore hoping that all Congressmen will meticulously observe the Settlement.

"So far as the charges against the Congress are concerned and so far as the denial of the charges by the Congress against the Provincial authorities is concerned, that is a matter of opinion. When the expected counter-charge sheet against the Congress is published, I shall be able to deal with it. For the moment, I can only say that the Working Committee of the Congress has been most anxious that the Congress should present an absolutely clean slate.

"I know the belief of the Government regarding the Frontier Province and the U. P. I have always combated that belief, but it has been a tug-of-war between two beliefs. All I can say is that I have done everything I could to ascertain the facts for myself, and I have not been able except in isolated cases to detect any breach on the part of Congressmen. Wherever it has been detected I have made admission and amends where possible to the Government. So far as charges against provincial authorities are concerned, I have offered on behalf of the Working Committee to establish them before an impartial tribunal. I could not do anything more and it would be a breach of duty to the Congress if I was satisfied with anything less. I fully acknowledge and am aware that the refusal of the Congress to be represented at the R. T. C. involves the failure of

one of the main objects of the Settlement. I regret it as much as the Government, but the Working Committee was helpless. Attendance at the Conference was conditional upon the fulfilment of the Settlement by the Government. Rightly or wrongly the Working Committee came to the conclusion and I associate myself with the conclusion, that the Provincial Governments have in more instances than one failed to implement the Settlement. With that belief it is not possible for the Congress to be represented at the Round Table Conference unless a way is found, namely, the appointment of a tribunal or reasonable satisfaction to the Congress in some other manner.

"In the midst therefore of conflict of opinion there should be a referee. My suggestion for a tribunal is, therefore, the most natural corollary. What shape that tribunal should take is undoubtedly a matter for mutual discussion and accommodation. Personally, I should be satisfied so long as there is reasonable assurance of impartiality from the tribunal. The appointment of such a tribunal can in no way diminish the dignity, prestige or authority of the Government. I hold that such an appointment is an ordinary function of a well-ordered Government and if this very Government has appointed committees of enquiry, for matters outside contractual relations how much greater there must be the need for such a tribunal when parties to the contract are dissatisfied as to the conduct of each towards the other and arising out of the contract itself."

At Simla

Mahatmaji arrived at Simla on the 25th, accompanied by Sir Prabhashunker Pattani, Dr. Ansari, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Khan Abdul Gafar Khan. He had long conversations with Mr. Emerson on the same day, at which most of the outstanding questions were discussed and agreement arrived at. On the 26th, he had conversation with the

Viceroy extending over three hours, the result of which was eagerly awaited by the whole country. When he came out of the Viceregal Lodge, it was known that he was proceeding to London by the boat leaving on the 29th. The news of the agreement was flashed throughout the country easing the tension of the last fortnight, which was replaced by satisfaction in every breast.

Once again in India's crisis wise statesmanship on the one hand and generous good-will on the other prevailed. There were frequent consultations between two or three members of the Viceroy's Executive Council on one side and Sir Prabhashunker Pattani, Dr. Ansari and Sir Cowasji Jehangir on the other. It is said that, but for the efforts of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Sir Joseph Bhore on one side and Sir P. Pattani, Dr. Ansari and Sir Cowasji Jehangir on the other, the result might have been different. Once again Lord Willingdon scored a triumph of wise statesmanship.

The Settlement

A meeting of the Viceroy's Executive Council was held immediately after Mahatmaji left the Viceregal Lodge and shortly afterwards a Government Communique was issued stating the terms of the settlement arrived at with Mahatma Gandhi. After reiterating that the Delhi Pact remained operative and that Mahatmaji will proceed to London as the representative of the Congress it proceeds:

"The Government of India, in full agreement with the Bombay Government, have ordered an enquiry into the allegations that Khatedars in eleven villages of Bardoli Taluka were compelled by coercion to pay revenue in excess of what would have been demanded if the standard adopted in other villages were given effect to.

Mr. R. G. Gordon, I. C. S., Collector of Nasik, will hold the enquiry. The Government are not prepared for an enquiry in any other area. Any complaints of a general nature may be dealt with in accordance with the ordinary administrative procedure, and an enquiry may be held if the Local Government agrees."

Return from Simla

As it was too late for Gandhiji to proceed to Kalka by road as already planned, a special train was arranged at short notice to take him to Kalka in time to catch the Bombay Mail. A large gathering was present at Simla station to give a hearty send-off to Gandhiji. Mahatmaji had telephoned to Pandit Malaviyaji at Allahabad to re-book his passage by the 29th mail boat. Malaviyaji started from Allahabad in time to catch the boat at Bombay accompanied by Mukund Malaviya and Govind Malaviya. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu who was already in Bombay also re-booked her passage by the same boat.

Although the news of the settlement reached Bombay rather late in the evening, elaborate arrangements were made by the local Congress Committee to give Mahatmaji a public send-off. A public meeting was also arranged to be held at the Azad maidan on the morning of the 29th and Indian businessmen had closed their shops on the morning to take part in the public function.

The railway stations throughout Gandhiji's route were humming with eager crowds to have his *darshan* and at Delhi he had to elbow his way among the crowds to his compartment in the Frontier Mail. As the train steamed in and out of each station cries of "Mahatma Gandhi-Jai-Jai" rent the air

At Bombay

As already planned, Mahatmaji had to alight at Bandra station and motor to his residence at "Mani Bhavan". But the crowds were so great at that station that it became physically impossible for him to alight and wend his way to the car. Hence it was arranged that he should alight at Dadar.

Immediately after detraining at Dadar, Mahatmaji motored to the Azad maidan where at 9-30 he addressed a meeting. Speaking from the balcony of a private house Mahatmaji addressed a huge enthusiastic crowd (who stood in drenching rain) for quarter of an hour.

"He said that he had signed the second Agreement with the Government. They could read it. Some of them may ask what this man had gone and done again. But he was aware that the nation had shown enormous trust in him by electing him as the sole delegate to the Round Table Conference. But for their trust, he would have refused to go to London. He knew full well his own shortcomings and weakness, but truth and non-violence would be his guiding principles and he hoped that they would come out in their fullness in his work in London.

Gandhiji continued: "I am a cripple, but it is only natural that a crippled nation should have a crippled delegate who alone can understand the difficulties and miseries of the millions."

Gandhiji assured his hearers that he would abide by the Congress mandate. He would deceive nobody, neither Englishmen nor anybody else, much less India's teeming millions. "If I deceive you, even to kill me would not be violence. I have no enmity with Englishmen, nor with Mahomedans, nor for the matter of that with anyone else."

After Mahatmaji had finished, Pandit Malaviyaji rose amidst cheers and said,

"Our cause is just, our means are noble and I am going with the fullest confidence of success. My only appeal to you is to remain non-violent and peaceful. I also appeal to all communities to keep peace and goodwill towards one another. Swaraj is our right and none can prevent us from having it. I know it is coming very soon."

Gandhiji's Kit

"Mani Bhavan", Mahatmaji's Bombay residence, was humming with feverish activities on the eve of his sailing. Miss Slade, who attended to his comforts during the voyage, busily packed his kit and belongings.

In London Mahatmaji decided to wear his usual dress and be bare-headed under ordinary circumstances, but if the cold be severe, he may use mixed khadi and woollen socks and jacket and a Kashmere woollen scarf as head-gear. He took with him two or three khadi rugs.

Mahatmaji's kit and belongings excited much more curiosity among the passengers than his personality and unconventional manners ever did. His kit consisted of a khadi trunk containing his hand-spun khadi clothes, a cane basket containing some tin vessels to which he seemed very much attached, a quantity of mixed khadi and woollen material to be made into an overcoat, if need arose, a quantity of leather (of an animal which died a natural death) for stitching a pair of shoes, three char-khas, ten gallons of pasteurised goats' milk and a large stock of dried fruits.

More than Mahatmaji's, Pandit Malaviya's luggage was curious. It consisted, besides his other belongings, a large quantity of Ganges mud and water and a number of bottles of cow's milk.

Regarding his passage Mahatmaji already telegraphed to Mr. Birla to book six berths of the lowest class, but as no such accommodation was available in the mail boat, he consented to travel by second class. Gandhiji was accompanied by his son, Devadass Gandhi, two secretaries and Miss Slade (Mira Ben). Other delegates to the Round Table Conference who sailed by the S. S. "*Rajputana*" were, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, the Raja of Korea and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Mr. G. D. Birla also sailed in the same boat for England.

Embarkation

Saturday the 29th August, the day of Mahatmaji's embarkation, was a gala day in Bombay. Such a high pitch of enthusiasm was evident as never before in the history of the city throughout that morning till past noon when the S. S. *Rajputana* sailed to England with Mahatmaji on board. The Indian quarters observed a holiday, where all shops were closed and businessmen thronged in large numbers first to the Azad maidan to hear Mahatmaji speak and thence to Ballard Pier to give him a hearty send-off. Congress volunteers and Desh Sevikas in their uniforms with national flags were promenading every part of the city with a happy countenance exhorting the people to attend first the meeting and then the send-off function, regulating traffic, singing national songs and distributing hand-bills. All classes and conditions of people from the fat merchant to the half-clad cooly, the old and the young, women and children thronged on either side of the route to the Mole station eager to have a fleeting *darshan* of the Mahatma. Despite occasional downpours of rain the

enthusiasm evinced by the people remained at its highest throughout the long hours of waiting.

Shortly after noon, Mahatmaji arrived escorted by Messrs. K. F. Nariman, Jammalal Bajaj and Vallabhbhai Patel and went up the steamer's gangway. Deafening shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai" rent the air. With great difficulty the party elbowed their way to Mahatmaji's cabin, where he rested for five minutes during which, he gave an interview to the press.

Mahatmaji's Message

To the Associated Press representative he gave the following message to his countrymen:

"Though I see nothing on the horizon to warrant hope, being a born optimist, I am hoping against hope. My faith is in God and He seems to have made my way clear for me to go to London. Therefore I expect He will use me as His instrument for the service of humanity. For me service of India is identical with the service of humanity.

"Though Congress may be repudiated by sections of the people of India, it aims at representing the whole of India, and, therefore, to deserve the trust that had been reposed in me and imposed upon me, I shall endeavour to represent every interest that does not conflict with the interests of the dumb millions for whom the Congress predominantly exists.

"I hope that Provincial Governments, the Civil Service and English mercantile houses will help the Congress to realise the mission it has set before itself. Representing, as the Congress does, the message of non-violence and truth, it can only succeed by the goodwill of all component parts of the nation and I am therefore hoping that goodwill will be extended to the humble representative that is going upon his errand".

On behalf of flood-stricken Bengal, he made the following appeal:

"I hope the people of Bombay Presidency will go to the rescue of flood-stricken Bengal and send their contributions to Sir P. C. Roy".

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, gave the following message :

"Promote goodwill and unity, keep your hopes high, hearts strong and Swaraj is coming.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu gave the following message :

"The only guarantee for success of the Round Table Conference is that every delegate who goes to London is responsible for the embodiment of the integrity and honour of India, which no power on earth can assail. The first essential for the maintenance of India's integrity is the instant solution of the outstanding Hindu-Muslim problem and that can only be solved when we cease to be Hindus and Muslims and when we have the honour and privilege of being true Indians dedicated to the service of India's freedom."

Sir Prabha Shankar Paitani who played the role of peace emissary interviewed said,

"I have nothing to say because I believe in and follow Mahatma Gandhi. This great result was due to the goodness of His Excellency the Viceroy, whose goodness has been proved both in Bombay and Madras Presidencies. It was also due to Gandhiji's great, though courageous, patience. Britain and India can now fairly hope that Mahatma Gandhi will bring back similar satisfactory solution from England and the three parties in England will make such consummation possible."

During the few minutes' absence of Mahatmaji inside his cabin, the crowd outside became restive and uncontrollable and gave out incessant shouts to have a

final *darshan* of the Mahatma. In response to it, Mahatmaji accompanied by Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Pandit Malaviyaji came up the deck where numerous photographers were waiting to obtain a last snap of him. "Be quick about it and let me go away" said Mahatmaji to them and the smiling faces of the four leaders were taken for the country to cherish during their absence in England.

Mahatmaji then retired to his cabin where he bade farewell to Mrs. Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel and numerous other friends who had come on board to see him off. Again Mahatmaji with Pandit Malaviyaji, Mrs. Naidu and Mr. G. D. Birla came to the deck and remained standing till the steamer cleared out of the harbour waving his hand in response to the cheers from ashore.

CHAPTER V

THE VOYAGE

DURING the voyage Mahatmaji was in excellent mood. He chatted merrily with passengers, played with children and endeared himself to one and all by his unflinching courtesy, gentleness and jocular behaviour. He spent the greater part of his time spinning as usual and the remainder in writing, reading and prayer. The voyage afforded him the much-needed rest after his strenuous exertion of the past few months. So he slept soundly though on the bare deck under the stars. He rose as usual at four in the early morning and attended to his daily routine which he kept up as when ashore. He did not become sea-sick though every one of his colleagues succumbed to it.

Captain H. Morton Jack proud of the distinction of conveying Mahatmaji on board his ship, treated him with every mark of respect and kindness. "I am a prisoner to you for a fortnight" said Mahatmaji to the Captain. "I will treat you well, but can make no promises about the weather" replied the Captain.

On board of the steamer, Mahatmaji received hundreds of telegrams wishing him *bon voyage* and success in his great mission, to all of which he replied. His correspondence while on board increased to such an extent that three wireless operators were kept incessantly at work and Mahatmaji himself had to borrow money to pay for the charges.

Sir Prabhashankar Pattani invited Mahatmaji to transfer to first class, but he declined saying that he was sufficiently comfortable where he was.

Message from Steamer

Mahatmaji's prayer meetings were attended by many of the passengers, while he attended one of their prayers and sang his favourite Christian hymn "Lead kindly Light." He spent part of his time in lecturing to the Indian students on board about religion and philosophy. From on board the steamer he sent a message to his countrymen through Reuter,

"Now that I am drawing away from the shores of India let me appeal to the Indian people to preserve an absolutely non-violent atmosphere during my absence" and urged the people of India to "follow out the constructive programme of the Congress, namely, the removal of the fourfold curse of drink, drugs, foreign cloth and untouchability and revive the village industry of spinning and promote the unity of classes."

"I also appeal to Englishmen, including officials, to trust the Congress and Congressmen if they really believe that power must pass from them to India."

"India of my Dream"

Asked by Reuter's special representative who accompanied Mahatmaji on board, as to what his programme in London would be, he said,

"I shall strive for a constitution which will release India from all thralldom and patronage and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony.

"There can be no room in such India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

"Women will enjoy the same rights as men.

"Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable.

"All interests not in conflict with the interest of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. I hate the distinction between foreign and indigenous.

"This is the India of my dreams, for which I shall struggle at the next Round Table Conference. I may fail, but if I am to deserve the confidence of the Congress, my principals, I shall be satisfied with nothing less."

At Aden

On arrival at Aden, Mahatmaji was given a rousing reception by the Indian residents. He went ashore accompanied by Mr. Mahadeva Desai and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and walked to the Indian quarters where he was presented with an address of welcome and wishing success in London. A purse containing a sum of £325 was also presented to him. Mahatmaji though appreciating the gift, like a true *Bania* that he was, in his country's

cause, considered the gift a bit small. He then called on the acting Resident and returned to the steamer.

As aforesaid, unfailing courtesy of the Captain was a source of great satisfaction to Mahatmaji during the voyage. He inspected the Captain's cabin and closely observed the intricacies of navigating the gigantic liner. He was shown the engine room, the radio department and the charthouse and the purpose of every bit of mechanical device found there was explained to him by the Captain. He was also allowed to try his hand at steering the ship for a while, when he humorously remarked "I hope I do not capsize the boat and drown everybody", as he turned the wheel from port to starboard. Mahatmaji was deeply touched by the Captain's hospitality and kindness.

At Suez

Arriving at Suez, Mahatmaji was welcomed by a number of Egyptians and Indians. He was not however able to visit the Sphinx and the Pyramids owing to the short stay of the mail boat at that port. He received a message of encouragement from Madam Zaghlul, widow of the late Zaghlul Pasha, the famous nationalist leader of Egypt and another from Nahas Pasha, the leader of the Wafd party of Egypt, who said, "I ask God to grant you success in your quest equal to the greatness of your determination." He also expressed a wish that Mahatmaji would visit Egypt on his return journey.

Vyapari Mandal's Cable

Mahatmaji also received a cable from the Bombay "Vyapari Mandal" expressing dissatisfaction at the absence of proper representation of their interests in London. It read thus :

"The Committee of the Vyapari Mahamandal wish *bon voyage* and success to you at the Conference. So far the Round Table Conference's attitude has been opposed to the nation's commercial interests. In the absence of commercial representatives, additional responsibility is thrust upon you. The foreigner's cry against discrimination is simply for preserving their entrenched monopolistic position. Their demands for safeguards are directed to attacks upon the nation's commercial, industrial and financial interests."

At Port Said

At Port Said a delegation consisting of Egyptians and Indians greeted Mahatmaji and presented him and Miss Slade with bouquets. He was however disappointed at the authorities preventing a large number of Egyptians and Indians who had arrived to see him, only a few out of the vast crowd being allowed to board the steamer. Asked by Reuter his opinion about the Egyptian aspirations, Mahatmaji said,

"I wish this country all she desires and is entitled to and I am sure the way to real freedom for Egypt as for India lies through non-violence."

Between Suez and Port Said, a large number of British and foreign journalists boarded the steamer and Mahatmaji had his first experience of them after leaving India. But as he was observing silence, he only wrote brief answers to their questions with his left hand, as his right hand was crippled owing to poor circulation and writer's cramp.

Moulana Shaukat Ali boarded the S. S. "*Rajputana*" at Port Said. He had long talks with Gandhiji regarding the settlement of the communal problem during the voyage.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST BATCH IN LONDON

IN the meanwhile, the news of Mahatmaji's consent to participate in the Round Table Conference and his starting by the S. S. "*Rajputana*" reached London where considerable satisfaction was expressed at the news by all sections of the public and the press. Great preparations were set afoot by various organisations social, political and religious, for his reception. Kingsley Hall, the home presided over by Miss Lester, where Mahatmaji had decided to put up during his stay in London was made ready for his reception. After a meeting held at the India Office, it was finally decided that a joint welcome of all the organisations should be accorded to Gandhiji and, consistent with his love of simplicity, grand processions and formal addresses were dispensed with. It was decided that he should be welcomed as a great personality, rather than as the leader of a political party.

The news likewise reached the first batch of Round Table delegates who had already proceeded by the S. S. "*Mooltan*," when they arrived at Marseilles at which they were immensely pleased.

On reaching London they were warmly welcomed by representatives of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India and the various parties in Parliament. Other distinguished officials and non-officials who were present to welcome them included, the High Commissioner for India, the Deputy High Commissioner, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir G. Corbett and Mr. Rushbrook Williams.

A party was given in their honour at the India House at which among others Mrs. Baldwin, Miss Isabel MacDonald and Lady Reading were present.

The opinion of the entire delegation regarding Mahatmaji's participation in the Round Table Conference was that it was a distinct advantage. But as regards the change of Government in England, the majority opined that it was the most opportune moment to negotiate a substantial advance of power from the British, while a few regretted the absence of Labour from power. However, a strong hope in the ultimate result of their mission was in everybody's breast.

Federal Structure Committee

The first meeting of the Federal Structure Committee was held on 7th September at which Lord Sankey presided. The Prime Minister on arrival shook hands with all the delegates and expressed his pleasure at renewing friendships made last winter and meeting new friends. He assured the delegates that whatever changes had taken place here, there had been no change in public aims or private friendships. He continued:

"Lord Sankey remains Chairman of the Committee, which is a guarantee of how the work will be done and I remain the Chairman of the Conference. If during the next week or so, I may be largely absorbed in other matters it will not mean that I have ceased to remember the duty I owe to the delegates or that I am not desperately determined to continue the same good relations."

Lord Sankey

Lord Sankey opened the proceedings by extending to them a most cordial welcome. He hoped that during the next few days it would be possible for the delegates to meet each other formally. He suggested a further

meeting on September 11, followed early next week by the first full meeting of all delegates who would then get to grips with the work.

Lord Sankey said the coming weeks would afford an opportunity of reaching an understanding. "Such an opportunity may never come again in our life-time. Do not let us miss it. Uniformity may not be possible, or may not even be desirable, but let us strive for unanimity. I believe that, with patience and goodwill we can and shall reach a settlement. There is world opinion which we shall rightly have to reckon if we fail."

"All schools of thought are represented round this table with one exception. That exception will cease to exist this day week when we shall welcome Mahatma Gandhi. He is not only one who has found it difficult to attend the Federal Structure Committee but it is idle to put your hand to the plough and then look back".

"The restoration of the peace and happiness in India was worth any personal sacrifice. Their great ambition was to see India as a nation realising her age-long dream of taking her proper part in the social and political thought and the development of the world. He said, "During the last few months India has never been absent from our thoughts for the day. Both here and with you the situation has been carefully surveyed. Problems have been set out and alternative modes of dealing with them prepared for your consideration."

He expressed the hope that the committee would get to grips with the difficulties and reach decisions as soon as possible and hoped that they would settle down to details next week.

Other Speeches

Members of the British delegation emphasised also that the recent political changes implied no change in the British attitude.

This point was emphasised by Sir Samuel Hoare speaking as a member of both the Government and Conservative delegation. He added that Conservatives were as anxious as anyone for a settlement ensuring both sound Government and goodwill.

Mr. Benn also gave the assurance that the situation had not changed as far as the Parliamentary Opposition was concerned and hoped, as an unofficial member, to serve India as he strove to do at the last meeting, while Lord Reading promised Liberals' co-operation in striving to bring India peace and contentment.

These assurances were welcomed by Indian speakers who expressed confidence at the outcome.

The Maharaja of Bikanir recorded his unflinching belief that with the constant inspiration of the King Emperor, they would achieve success.

Sympathy with Britain's present difficulties was offered by Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, who emphasised the need for a spirit of sympathy and compromise.

Mr. Sastri declared that the Indian delegation was inspired by the same spirit as before "for there have been no revolutionary changes in the Government or the Opposition among us."

Sir T. B. Sapru welcomed the representative character of both the British and Indian delegations as likely to facilitate a settlement.

Sir Akbar Hydari associated himself with the general expressions of goodwill and satisfaction and affirmed that Hyderabad's belief in the Federal idea had not changed.

Sir Mahammed Shafi expressed the common desire that they should succeed in framing for India a constitution in which all sections, irrespective of colour, caste or creed, will find a legitimate place. He added, "Should that consummation be reached, not only will the happiness and contentment of 350 millions of His Majesty's Indian subjects be thereby secured but India will be a source of strength to that great Commonwealth of which she aspires to be a component part."

The Committee decided to adjourn till Monday, the 14th September.

Gandhiji's Day of Silence

On September 8th when Mahatmaji was shown a Reuter's message that the Federal Structure Committee meeting was postponed till Monday the 14th, he replied "If the meeting is held on Monday, I will be in the most embarrassing position. Monday is my day of silence. When I took the vow, I made three exceptions.

First, if I am in distress and can only be assisted by my speaking.

Second, if some one else is distressed, and

Third, exceptional circumstances such as an unexpected call from the Viceroy or other high official who must be seen in the interest of the cause."

Gandhiji added that his appearance at the Committee on Monday could only come under the third exception but only by a considerable stretch of meaning, seeing that it is not sudden and unexpected. The Mahatma pointed out that since he must hold himself in readiness for a private conference with two of the highest Government officials on Sunday he could not anticipate the period of silence nor postpone it to Tuesday because

the Committee will sit during the whole of the week.. He said he was hoping and praying that it would not be necessary to reach a final decision but that a way out of the difficulty would be found.

CHAPTER VII THE RECEPTION

THE arrangements for the reception of Mahatmaji in London were going on apace. Leaders of public life and representatives of churches and social, political and industrial bodies numbering nearly 1,400, were invited to attend the function of welcoming Mahatmaji to the shores of England. A strong and influential reception committee was formed in which were Messrs. Marley, Horrabin, Brockway, Mrs. Brijlal Nehru, Mrs. Harold Laski, Miss Lester, Messrs. Polak, Andrews, John Fletcher, Horace Alexander, Krishna Menon (Secretary), Gilbert Murray, Lawrence Binon, A. J. Cook, Rev. William Paton and Miss Maude Roydon. The reception was to be held at "Friends' House" in Euston Road, immediately after Gandhiji arrived in London. There were to be no speeches except one of welcome by Mr. Lawrence Housman.

At Marseilles

On the 11th September, the mail boat *S. S. Rajputana* reached Marseilles. Hundreds of eager visitors were waiting at the dockside to have a sight of the great man from India, and when they sighted Mahatmaji on deck attired in his loin cloth and a hand-spun shawl in spite of the severe cold, they burst forth into eager exclamations. The Indian students who had collected in large numbers raised the cry of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai" to which Gandhiji replied by raising his clasped hands above head. As soon as the gang-

way was lowered, there was a mad rush by pressmen and photographers. The police had the utmost difficulty in restraining the crowd. Gandhiji said he could see the pressmen only in groups of five.

Mahatmaji's first appearance had dissipated any prejudice that might have been entertained against him. His infectious smile captured the hearts of all. French journalists began to volley him with questions, to which he submitted patiently. One of them asked, if he would traverse the streets of London and possibly enter Buckingham palace in his loin cloth.

Mahatmajee replied jocularly, "you in your country wear plus fours, I prefer minus fours".

Asked if he had anything to declare by the customs authorities, Mahatmaji replied, "I am a poor mendicant, my earthly possessions consist of six spinning wheels, prison dishes, a can of goat's milk, six home spun loin cloths, towels and my reputation which cannot be worth much". The Inspector smiled and passed him on.

Via Paris

Mahatmaji afterwards attended the Indian students' reception and left by the P and O special for Calais. When it made a brief halt at the *Gare de Lyons* in Paris, the Indian students made a demonstration and cheered wildly. Movie-men vainly pressed Mahatmaji to make a talkie. An American announcer microphoned a few words from Gandhiji testifying to the thrill he felt to be in the free atmosphere of one of the world's greatest republics.

Asked his opinion about the possibility of success of the Round Table Conference by Reuter, Mahatmaji replied :

"The British Government is faced with such staggering domestic problems that it is not likely to take responsibility for refusing India's demands, with the consequent renewal of Civil Disobedience and Boycott. Nor shall I assume responsibility for renewal of struggle until every possibility of peace is exhausted."

He added that the thought of a change of Government in England would not influence his policy.

"Sir S. Hoare seems to me to be a typical British gentleman. I think his sympathies would be rather with than against me."

Mahatmaji believed that more could be gained by private conferences between leaders in London than at the actual sittings of the Round Table Conference.

Questioned again by Reuter while nearing the English shore, Mahatmaji replied "you have milked me dry, as my favourite goat."

Mahatmaji reached Folkestone harbour at 2 p.m., on the 12th. Though it was raining heavily, the vicinity of the harbour was thronged with spectators. The crush was so great that police precautions were necessary and entrance to the Harbour Station was allowed only on production of a special permit.

Arrival in England

Mahatmaji was met at Folkestone by Mr. F. M. Vincent on behalf of the Secretary of State and the Government and by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and was driven off in a motor car. He was given a welcoming cheer by people gathered outside the dock gates.

He arrived in London at 4 p.m., and was driven straight to the Friends' Meeting House on Euston Road where the reception had been arranged. He arrived at Euston Road at 10 minutes past four.

Despite the heavy rain and chill of the English autumn, Mahatmaji was still wearing his loin cloth and shawl when he stepped out of his motorcar at the Friends' Meeting House, on conclusion of the two hour drive from Folkestone. On entering the hall for the reception given in his honour by Indian and British friends, Mahatmaji was garlanded with flowers.

The audience at the Friends' Meeting House was composed almost equally of British and Indians, among whom a number were wearing Gandhi caps. After a patient but expectant wait, the whole of the assemblage rose and applauded for some moments on the entrance of Mahatmaji who was accompanied by Pandit Malaviya, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mr. Marley, Mr. Sastri, Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar, Mira Ben and others. Cheers were renewed as he and Pandit Malaviya were garlanded, Mahatmaji standing smiling, with his hands clasped.

Welcome and Reply

The proceedings began with the observance of a short period of silence. Then Mr. Housman, on behalf of his own and Mahatmaji's countrymen tendered him a welcome, both cordial and grateful. He assured him that there was a growing volume of goodwill towards India in that country.

Mahatmaji, though he looked well, appeared tired and worn. He delivered his address without emotion and without gesture, the only movement being an occasional turning of his head quietly and deliberately. He explained the Congress aims and appealed for the dumb and semi-starved millions "whom he represented without fear of contradiction." He came on a mission of peace. He and his friends were the guests of the

English and he hoped when their work was finished they would not be considered to have abused their hospitality.

Mahatmaji emphasised that he must conduct himself within the Congress mandate some words of which left him little freedom, but in all other respects and in all fundamentals he was unbound.

Mahatmaji emphasised the Congress belief that freedom could only be attained by truth and non-violence and after making a reference to the harm done by resort to violence, said that he would feel he had done his duty if he convinced the British that freedom was to be won through Congress means.

"But there is something more. There is the settlement between the Government of India and the Congress. That is the sacred thing arrived at through the strivings of that noble Englishman, Lord Irwin. I had repeatedly promised him that if it was humanly possible I would come to London and as soon as I felt the way was open I have dashed to London."

Recommending a study of the Indian question Mahatmaji realised the difficulty because the British were rightly preoccupied with Home affairs. "But I wish it is possible for English men and women to realise that the budget will not be honestly balanced unless the balance between Britain and India is set right."

Concluding Mahatmaji asked the audience to work for the fulfilment of his mission, for it would be for the good not only of India but of the whole world.

Cheers and cries of "Bande Mataram" and "Gandhi-ki-Jai" broke out again as he finished and slowly walked from the hall and stood for a moment in the rain. He was cheered by the crowd outside.

Mahatmaji then motored to Kingsley Hall where he was welcomed by the Mayor of Poplar and appeared on the balcony and acknowledged the greeting of hundreds awaiting his arrival.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

DURING the preliminary meeting of the Federal Structure Committee held on 7th September, it was at first proposed to appoint a Sub-Committee for drawing up a tabular list of heads of subjects to be brought for the consideration of the full Committee, but the work was afterwards taken over by Lord Sankey himself. Accordingly Lord Sankey prepared a questionnaire containing the tabulated heads of subjects and submitted it to the members of the Committee for their consideration.

On Sunday, the 13th September, the day previous to the meeting of the Federal Structure Committee, the Indian States delegation consisting of their Highnesses the Maharajahs of Bikaner and Rewa, the Nawab of Bhopal, the Chief of Sangli and other members and advisers met at the Carlton Hotel and discussed in detail, the implications of federation as affecting Indian States.

Sir Sapru's Dinner

A private dinner was arranged on the same day by Sir T. B. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar at Dorchester House, London's latest *hotel de luxe*, to afford Mahatmaji an opportunity of discussing Indian constitutional problems with the other members of the delegation. Their Highnesses, the Nawab of Bhopal, the Maharajah of Bikaner, Col. Haksar, Mr. A. Rangaswamy

Iyengar, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lord Sankey and others were present. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald could not at first attend as he was away at Chequers, but he returned unexpectedly early and while the dinner was proceeding suddenly dropped in. He had a private conversation with Mahatmaji for more than half an hour, at which, it was said that only general opinions were exchanged.

Monday's Session

Mahatmaji was the centre of interest when, for the first time he attended the meeting of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee of the Indian Round Table Conference, on Monday the 14th September over which Lord Sankey presided.

Carrying a flask of goat's milk, which was his only nourishment until evening and closely wrapped in a blanket, the Mahatma accompanied by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, motored from East End to West End, from the simple residence at Bow to the Palace of St. James, which he entered by the Press door. Gandhiji sat immediately to the left of Lord Sankey. He did not speak during the proceedings as it was his weekly day of silence. But occasionally, he wrote a brief question and handed it to the Chairman, who wrote his answer and handed it back. His immediate companions were Pandit Malaviya, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar.

The new Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, sat on the Chairman's right.

Lord Sankey, who received Mahatma Gandhi on arrival, introduced him to Sir Samuel Hoare.

The Committee spent a day in general debate in the course of which new members spoke and expressions

of optimism as to the successful conclusion of the labours of the Conference were uttered as the outcome of the fact that the Conference was now fully representative.

Lord Sankey announced that "he would not call on Mahatma Gandhi (who followed the proceedings intently while steadfastly observing silence) and Pandit Malaviya to speak to-day, but hoped that they would speak to-morrow."

Four Heads for Discussion.

It was decided that when the general discussion was over, the Committee must consider four main heads for discussion namely,

1. Strength and composition of the Federal Legislature.
2. Direct and Indirect election.
3. Relations of two chambers and
4. Distribution of finances between the Federation and its units.

No Ultimatum.

Lord Sankey extended a welcome to the three new delegates not present at the last meeting—H. H. the Gaekwar of Baroda, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Their presence, he said, greatly strengthened the representative character of the Committee. He was convinced that, with patience and goodwill such as had been displayed during the earlier work of the Committee, a settlement would be reached. Their duty was to make suggestions and examine their acceptability. He did not anticipate anything in the nature of an ultimatum from any quarter but he would remind the Committee that the ultimatum came, if at all at the end and not at the beginning of negotiations.

Baroda Maharaja's Assurance.

On behalf of the Princes, the Maharaja of Baroda opened the general discussion and gave an assurance of their co-operation in achieving the aim of a united self-governing India, thereby bringing to actuality the dream which he had cherished throughout his life.

Dr. S. A. Khan on Central Responsibility

Dr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan gave general approval to the Federation and enumerated a number of points of which he desired to lay emphasis, as for instance, the necessity of the provinces enjoying full and real autonomy, including autonomy in finance. He advocated, in this connection, the transfer to the provinces of some central subjects. He also doubted the practicability, in all circumstances, of the appointment of a Chief Minister in the Central Government. He suggested that the Governor-General should be empowered to appoint direct to the Cabinet, ministers representing groups in the legislature.

Dr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan added that since the last Conference, Moslem opinion had crystallised and they desired that questions concerning Central Responsibility should be discussed last. He was grateful that the agenda had been arranged to meet their wishes, since, unless they knew what the position would be, it was difficult to commit themselves. He trusted that this matter would not be reached until the Minorities Sub-Committee had met.

There was a dramatic incident. When Mr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan was arguing in favour of settlement of the position of the minorities before Central Responsibility was discussed, Mr. Sastri stood up and said: "I hope Dr. Shafaat is putting his own views" and asked if he was supported by other Moslems.

When Sir Mahomed Shafi rose to reply, the President intervened, saying that the Committee would not pursue the point at the present stage.

Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar on Safeguards

The view that it should not be difficult to find a formula acceptable to all was expressed by Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar provided the Irwin-Gandhi Pact was taken as a basis and the principle was applied that safeguards must be in the interest of India.

Mrs. Subbaroyan put the case for guaranteeing women equal right under the constitution.

Mr. Joshi urged that Labour legislation must be a central responsibility.

The Maharaja of Rewa reiterated his view regarding the need for precaution, while Sir Provash Mitter emphasised that whatever steps were taken they must be in the interests of peace and unity of India.

Mr. Zafrullah and Sir M. Dadabhoy both welcomed Mr. Gandhi's participation as it was likely to facilitate a solution.

Mr. Zafarullah emphasised his reservations on the communal questions declaring that a constitution would not work unless the minorities enjoyed a sense of security.

Sir M. Dadabhoy, dealing with finance, emphasised that Indian and British financial interests were identical. India needed British capital for her own advancement.

Sir M. Dadabhoy, referring to the statement of Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar, that India would pay her "just dues," deprecated the ambiguity which the words implied and declared that nobody in India would countenance the suggestion of repudiation.

Sir M. Dadabhai laid great emphasis on the necessity of upholding safeguards. He described the intimate connection between British and Indian finance. Financial safeguards, he said, were necessary and in the interests of both countries. India as a whole would not contract any proposal which had the effect even to the smallest extent of repudiating India's debt.

Communal Issue no bar to Constitutional Progress

Regarding the Hindu-Muslim communal issue, he was confident that communities would themselves settle the problem, which must not be allowed to stand in the way of reforms or the constitution. If the present opportunity was allowed to slip he did not think there would be another so good for fifty years. Failing a settlement by the communities he hoped the British Parliament or Government would, if necessary, act as arbitrator.

After adjournment, most of the delegates attended a reception given by Sir Samuel and Lady Hoare at India Office.

Mr. Gandhi returned direct to Kingsley Hall.

Gandhiji's Speech

The Federal Structure Committee was resumed on the 15th when it was marked by very keen interest as Mahatmaji was to speak on that day putting the Congress case for the first time before the Round Table Conference.

Gandhiji, who was sitting on the left of Lord Sankey was the first speaker. He spoke seated, in slow sentences for 45 minutes. The speech was not prepared but he periodically referred to notes.

Gandhiji, at the outset said that he had come to London absolutely in a spirit of co-operation and to strive his utmost

to find points of agreement. He could only say to those responsible for the management of the Federal Structure Subcommittee and the Conference that they had only to give the sign and he would have no hesitation in withdrawing. He knew that there were fundamental differences of opinion between the Government and the Congress and possibly there were vital differences between his colleagues and himself.

Mahatmaji said that he did not wish at any stage to embarrass the Government or his colleagues at the Conference. He then sketched the aims of the Indian National Congress on which all classes and religions were represented. From the very beginning Congress had taken up the cause of the so-called "untouchables".

"I am but a poor humble agent acting on behalf of the Indian National Congress and it may be well to remind yourselves of what the Congress stands for and what it is."

Congress was not intent upon Complete Independence in order to parade before the Universe that they had severed all connection with the British people. The mandate contemplated a partnership as between two absolute peoples.

Referring to the Karachi Mandate Gandhiji said,

"I am open to conviction, but even so I have to ask my principals to consent to the revision, before I can usefully act as agent of the Congress."

He reminded himself of the terms of what was to him a sacred settlement arrived at in Delhi between the Government of India and Congress. In that settlement the Congress had accepted the principle of Federation. Neither the Congress nor he could be satisfied with a political constitution which, in reality, gave India nothing.

A striking passage in the speech was:

"I would love to go away with the conviction that there is to be an honourable and equal partnership between Britain and India. It will be my fervent prayer during all the days I live in your midst that that consummation may be reached."

Further Speeches

Pandit Malaviya, who spoke immediately after Mahatma Gandhi, endorsed the viewpoint sketched out by Mahatmaji. He referred to the hopes raised by the R. T. C. notably by the invitation to the Congress to participate in it that the British had made up their minds to admit the Indians to equal partnership. He said that nothing short of it would satisfy India's demand.

Pandit Malaviya emphasised that a settlement of this question would facilitate the discussion of difficulties and assured them that everything possible would be done to remove the misgivings of the friends of India.

Dealing briefly with the details, Pandit Malaviya emphasised the necessity of reducing the cost of India's administration and, while envisaging the retention of British officers in the Indian Army suggested the withdrawal of British troops in the interests of economy.

Pandit Malaviya declared that the importance of maintaining India's credit was fully realised and everything would be done to strengthen it. Finally he urged that the question of Minorities should not be allowed to hinder the Committee's work.

The Chief of Sangli dealt with the conditions on which the States agreed to enter the Federation. He reminded the Committee that the rulers' rights could not be safeguarded. Their sovereignty could not be modified, except through their consent. He said that the States did not wish to interfere with the provinces or

allow interference in their own affairs. He, therefore, advocated a reduction of the number of central subjects to the fewest possible.

Sir Samuel Hoare explained that whenever he intervened in the discussions, it must not be taken as a considered declaration on behalf of the Government. He considered himself there in a dual capacity, first, as Secretary of State and second as an individual Committee man.

He welcomed very much the frank expressions of opinion by the new members. Obviously those speeches contained a number of very controversial points. The new members have been always agreed on many important issues. He suggested that this was not the occasion in the deliberations on which they should enter into general controversy. It would be much better to lay aside general principles and remember that they were a committee with definite terms of reference, namely, to see whether they could work out details of an All-India Federation within the British Empire.

Lord Reading, who followed Sir S. Hoare also signified that he did not intend to deal with the points which had been raised during the debate as they would come up later. He welcomed the fact that the Committee had been able to hear Mr. Gandhi's and Mr. Malaviya's views.

The general debate then ended.

Sir M. Shafi, said that Gandhiji's speech was of happy augury for he believed that it would lead to a communal settlement, which was essential not only for the success of the Conference but for the future of India.

Subjects Discussed

Representation of the States in the Federal Legislature, the Oath of Allegiance and the methods of election were among subjects discussed by the Committee afterwards the speakers being Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Mahomed Shafi, H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner and Sir Akbar Hydari. There was general agreement with the view expressed by Sir Akbar Hydari that the oath which subjects of the States took, should not conflict with their allegiance to their own sovereigns.

Sir Mahomed Shafi expressed the opinion that no difficulty would be found in arranging a satisfactory formula.

Regarding the representation of the States, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Sir Mahomed Shafi emphasised that it was a matter for the States themselves, but hoped that in the Lower Chamber it would be possible for the States to arrange for their representatives to be returned on an elective basis.

His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner pointed out that it would be impossible for the Princes' Delegation to dictate to the various States how their representatives should be selected. This would depend on the circumstances of each individual State.

Lord Peel and Sir Sapru

A breezy interlude occurred at this stage which contributed much to the merriment of the assembly when in the course of Sir T. B. Sapru's speech, Lord Peel was attempting to cross-examine him, Sir Sapru said that it was mischievous for official members to be told to vote a particular way according to Government instructions

The Chairman queried, "Surely nobody is really told to vote a certain way?"

Mr. A. Rangasawami Iyengar said, "It is so in India" and Sir Tej Bahadur added, "I have been a member in Lord Reading's Government and have myself issued orders to that effect."

Lord Peel, with affected surprise, inquired, "Did you do it?"

And Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru rejoined, "I did, and if I were at liberty to disclose things, Lord Peel, I would say you made me do it on a very famous occasion, when you will remember the Government of India was in the melting pot, because of your orders."

The delegates laughed louder when the Chairman wound up the interlude saying, "the only thing Lord Peel can do is to apologise and pay the costs."

Elections

The general debate on direct and indirect election to the Federal Legislature was continued at the Federal Structure Sub-Committee on the 16th by Mirza Sir Ismail, Sirdar Ujjal Singh, Mr. Zafurullah Khan, Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar and Mr. Joshi. The discussion ranged over a wide field and comprised voters' qualifications, need for special constituencies and analogous questions.

The suggestion that the British Government should appoint a committee to decide how representatives of groups of States should be selected and also the distribution of seats among the States was made by Mirza Sir Ismail, who contemplated that the States' representatives in the Upper House should be chosen by the States' Governments. He said that the method of selection for the Lower House was a matter for the States, who

would doubtless bear in mind the popular election as the ultimate goal.

Except Mr. Joshi, who considered a Second Chamber unnecessary but said that he was interested in the establishment of a democracy rather than in a new form of government, British Indian delegates generally favoured indirect election to the Upper House and direct election to the Lower Chamber.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar advocated recognition of the principle that representation of States as units should be confined to the Upper House whereas the nation as a whole should be represented in the Lower Chamber. He urged that this would facilitate a solution of the difficulties connected with grouping of States and weightage.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, like Mr. Joshi, advocated universal suffrage and said that constituencies for special interests must be regarded as only transitional.

Sardar Ujjal Singh declared that the settlement of the communal question was essential for Sikhs to commit themselves to the Federal Scheme.

Mr. Zafrullah Khan also pointed out that his remarks were subject to the reservation made by Sir Mahomed Shafi yesterday that the opinions expressed must be subject to the report of the Minorities Sub-Committee and the Moslem claim for one-third of the seats in the whole Federal Legislature.

Mr. Joshi's views on Second Chamber were strongly criticised by Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, who maintained that during the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms the Upper House saved India from disaster. He advocated

the retention of the present official bloc for some time in view of the great experiment to be made.

Provision for Minorities

The constitutional provisions for representation to be accorded to the minorities were among the points advocated by Dr. Ambedkar, who urged that the States' representation in both Houses should be elected. He feared that otherwise the States' nominees would take the place at present occupied by the official bloc.

Dr. Ambedkar opposed representation of special interests, but, if adult suffrage was not approved, it would be necessary to arrange for representation of Labour. He suggested in this regard that Trade Unions might be constituted into electoral colleges.

A Bit of Fun

There were constant occasions for merriment among the delegates as when some Princes agreed that the State Legislatures should have a voice in the selection of representatives to the Federal Legislature, Mr. Joshi said he was not satisfied with a mere voice.

Lord Sankey interposed, "You want a loud-speaker!"

Sir M. Dadabhoy's speech gave several opportunities for these pleasantries.

Numerous speakers to-day emphasised the necessity for the States agreeing to a form of election of their representatives.

Dr. Ambedkar was particularly outspoken in criticising the Princes. The only way, he said, to prevent their nominees in the Legislature from taking the place at present occupied by the official bloc was to put the representation of the States in both the Houses on an elective basis.

At the end of the proceedings it was generally agreed that the time had arrived for putting an end to

general debate and converging their discussions on definite issues.

Gandhiji on the Proceedings

The general debate in the Federal Structure Committee continued on the 17th when Mahatmaji was the first to speak.

Mahatmaji at the outset confessed that he participated in the discussion at the present stage after great hesitation. He said he had been feeling growing oppression since Monday.

First, because he realised that the delegates were not the chosen ones of the nation but of the Government and felt oppressed by a sense of unreality at the composition of the Conference.

Secondly, there was sense of unreality as the proceedings seemed to be interminable, leading practically nowhere.

He tendered his deepest sympathies to the Chairman for the patience and courtesy with which he was handling the members and congratulated him on the pains he was taking.

Gandhiji hoped that eventually, it would be possible to congratulate him on enabling or compelling them to achieve tangible result.

Gandhiji then suggested to the Chairman to appoint a sub-committee to give some points for conclusion. He asked the Chairman to bring his suggestions to the notice of His Majesty's advisers.

Lord Sankey said he would certainly do so.

Gandhiji, proceeding urged the Government to place its own cards on the table. He said he wanted them to say what they would do if the members appointed them as arbiters of their destiny and if, then they sought the Committee's advice it would be given.

"The Princes, be it said to their credit, had declared courageously for a Federation and by doing so they had proved that they were of the same blood. How could they do otherwise? There was no difference between them and the Princes, except that God had made them noblemen."

It was for the Princes to make up their minds whether or not to come into the Federation and it was upto British India to make it easy for them. He would ask the Princes not to come into the Federation unless they could do so wholeheartedly.

Gandhiji's views on Elections

Gandhiji next dealt with the questions of direct and indirect election. Here again the words "indirect election" did not frighten him. He was wedded to Adult Suffrage and the Congress swore by it because it enabled them to satisfy all reasonable aspirations of Mussalmans, as also the vast number of "Untouchables".

Gandhiji said he was unable to bear the idea of a wealthy man getting a vote while the honest labourer was debarred because of his poverty. As one who had lived with the poorest, he prided himself on being considered an "untouchable."

Gandhiji knew some of the finest specimens of humanity among the poor and among the very "untouchables" themselves. He would rather forego the vote than see his "untouchable" brother deprived of it.

Gandhiji was not enamoured on literacy, though he desired to see the people literate, but he was not prepared to wait for it before the people were enfranchised.

Gandhiji visualised 500,000 villages of India electing their own representatives to the Central Legislature. If Adult Suffrage was adopted a scheme of this descrip-

tion must be adopted. It worked excellently, expeditiously and cheaply and without any difficulty in establishing contact with the humblest villager.

Opposing a Second Chamber, Gandhiji said he had no fear of the popular chamber hastily passing laws of which they would have to repent, but he could visualise a battle royal between the popular and the Upper Houses. While he would not take a decisive attitude he personally thought one chamber sufficient and advantageous.

Coming to the question of representation of special interests Gandhiji said the Congress would share with Dr. Ambedkar the *onus* of representing the interests of the "untouchables" which were as dear to them as any interest. He would therefore resist special representation. Labour did not need special treatment with adult suffrage and certainly there was no cause to accord it to the landlords. There was no desire to dispossess the landlords but they should act as trustees for their tenants.

Re : Europeans

Referring to the Europeans, Gandhiji suggested that they had hitherto been a privileged clan, enjoying Government protection. If they now made common cause with the people they need not be afraid. Gandhiji would take Mr. Gavin Jones throughout the country and show him that he (Mr. Gavin Jones) would be preferred to an Indian. He assured the committee that Mr. C. F. Andrews would be elected from any part of India. Such instances could be multiplied.

Europeans must rely on the goodwill of the people. In any scheme to which the Congress was a party there would be no room for special protection. He had letters

from organisations, such as those of Christians, who needed no special protection.

Referring to the Oath of Allegiance, Gandhiji said he was unable to express any opinion, as he wanted first to know what form of oath it was to be. If it was to be complete freedom, the Oath of Allegiance must be of one kind and one kind alone. If it was to be a subject India, he had no place in it.

Gandhiji next touched the question of nomination, which he strongly opposed. If experts were wanted they should give their opinion and retire. He could not possibly endorse a scheme for nominated members.

Gandhiji added there should be a clause in the constitution providing that if the constituencies failed, to elect representatives of certain classes, as for instance, women. Europeans and representatives of commerce, should be selected or nominated by the legislature.

After Gandhiji had finished, Sir Sultan Ahmed, Sir Akbar Hydari and Mrs. Subbaroyan asked several questions which Gandhiji answered by way of amplification. Replying to Mrs. Subbaroyan, Gandhiji said he would boycott any legislature which did not elect women freely.

Sapru's View

Dr. T. B. Sapru, who followed Gandhiji expressed disagreement with his views on a unicameral legislature and told that a Second Chamber is necessary, in order to provide for the representation of the States and Provincial Governments. He visualised, however, an Upper Chamber differently constituted from the Council of State, which had failed to impress the public.

Examining the position from the viewpoint of money bills he expressed the opinion that they should ori-

ginate in the Lower House but need pass through the Upper House also and, referring to the difficulty of defining a Money Bill, suggested the adoption of the clause in the Irish Constitution on this point.

He also urged Lord Sankey, in this connection, to take up the question of the Supreme Court which would solve many legislative difficulties.

Dr. Sapru contemplated that they should be called by the Government in power, whereas Sir Provash Mitter thought that the responsibility should be with the Governor-General.

There was also divergence of opinion regarding the majority vote necessary in the event of a joint session. Sir P. C. Mitter favoured a majority vote but Mr. Zaf-rullah Khan drew attention to the probable difference in the size of the two Chambers and expressed the opinion that if they were unequal a vote exceeding a bare majority would be necessary.

The Marquess of Lothian, deprecating the organisation of the Upper House on party lines, drew attention to its function in other constituencies as a delaying chamber and suggested that this was also desirable in the Indian Constitution.

Further Proceedings

In the course of the proceedings of the Federal Structure Committee on the 18th, Dr. Ambedkar pointed out with reference to Mahatmaji's speech of the preceding day that the Congress had not considered the nature of the Federal Legislature and Executive but only whether India was to remain in the Empire. He asked whether Mr. Gandhi was giving his personal views. He also asked whether the method of election suggested by

Mr. Gandhi was not rejected by the Congress in Dr. Besant's Home Rule Bill.

Lord Sankey said Mr. Gandhi would doubtless answer later.

Mr. Joshi declared that Labour would not demand special representation if there was Adult Suffrage. He regretted that Mr. Gandhi was unwilling to concede it to the depressed classes.

Mrs. Subbaroyan welcomed Mr. Gandhi's lead in connection with the presence of women in the legislature. She said that she did not share completely the view of the All-India Women's Conference that women did not need special treatment. She considered that there should be a constitutional provision ensuring women a place in the legislature during the first formative years.

Pandit Malaviya laid stress on the importance of paying attention to the extent of responsibility to be conferred in the Central Government since the only Government which had been successful was one exercising supreme authority all over India.

Deprecating asking too much of the Princes, Pandit Malaviya said that he would leave the principle of popular representation.

Malaviya and Ambedkar

While Pandit Malaviya was referring to education and political progress, Dr. Ambedkar intercepted: "My education does not affect my untouchability."

Pandit Malaviya replied: "Dr. Ambedkar is not an 'untouchable' but a dear colleague and brother with whom we are delighted to work."

Col. Haksar said that the States representatives in the Upper Chamber should be nominated and in the

case of smaller States this should be effected through groups constituting electoral colleges which might involve a process akin to elections and referring to the Lower Chamber he submitted that it was immaterial whether members were nominated or elected provided the identity of interests between the ruler and the ruled was admitted.

The Moslem View

The Moslem view was put by Sir M. Shafi, who stated that, after prolonged discussions, Moslems were of opinion that the powers of each Chamber must be approximately equal. He had no hesitation to say from his own experience that the Council of State exercised a stabilising effect of the greatest benefit to India and prevented Congress from smashing the legislature as would have happened with only one chamber.

Sir Mahomed Shafi contended that once the principle of bicameral legislature was conceded, the assent of both Houses to any measure should be essential and it should be possible to introduce bills in either Chamber. Money Bills, however, should originate in the Lower House.

Briefly, Sir M. Shafi advocated the continuance of the existing practice for voting supply and the continuance of the provisions of the Government of India Act regarding differences of opinion between the two Chambers, except that the calling of a joint session will be obligatory and not left to the option of the Governor-General.

The Moslem delegates to the Round Table Conference met at H. H. The Aga Khan's room and decided to take no initiative in starting any kind of conversa-

tions for the settlement of communal problems, but only to carry on the work of the Conference without offering any obstruction.

Indian Merchants' Delegation

After powerful representations were made to the Government of India and considerable agitation in the press, Messrs. G. D. Birla and Jamal Mahomed along with Sir P. Thakurdas were at last invited by the Government of India to attend the Round Table Conference on behalf of the Indian Merchants' Federation at which considerable satisfaction was evinced by all parties concerned. Mr. G. D. Birla was already in England and Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdass and Mr. Jamal Mahomed started for England by the next available mail boat.

Views of Delegates

As the first week of the deliberations of the Federal Structure Committee was proceeding it was being felt by members of the Indian delegation that the Government were deliberately withholding expression of their policy, pending the result of the Minorities sub-committee. It was also feared that the domestic crisis in England may precipitate events prejudicial to India's claims. The majority of the Indian delegation therefore resolved in a body to attempt to force the Government to a definite pronouncement of their policy by co-ordination. And in view of the meetings of the Minorities sub-committee at an early date it was also resolved to set afoot negotiations between the Hindu and Muslim delegates to explore the possibility of arriving at a settlement of the communal problem. That Gandhiji may be near at hand for the constant calls of his colleagues, it was decided that he should remove to a

flat at Knight's Bridge, nearer to St. James Palace. Mahatmaji took Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar as his political secretary for Conference work.

Meanwhile Mr. Jinnah and the Maharajah of Dholpur had arrived and took part in the deliberations of the Federal Structure Committee.

The Moslem Demand

Mr. Jinnah put before Mahatma Gandhi the implications of the Moslem demands, his view being unchanged, namely, if separate electorates and Moslem majority in the Punjab and Bengal are guaranteed Moslems themselves might recognise the force of the joint electorates for the full development of Moslem Nationalism.

Gandhiji, however was reluctant to take the final step until he has had an opportunity of consulting Nationalist Moslems. It was believed that he was very anxious for the presence of Dr. Ansari and asked friends to use their influence to secure his nomination to the Conference.

Pandit Malaviya and Dr. Moonji were carefully watching the situation with a view to bringing the weight of their position and influence towards settlement.

A definite step towards a Hindu-Muslim rapprochement was taken at a meeting of the Hindu delegates at which Mr. Vithalbhai Patel was also present, when it was decided that Mahatmaji should open negotiations with H. H. The Aga Khan. Mr. Patel and others also pressed Mahatmaji to stand firm on the Congress demands, till Government's intention to grant Central Responsibility and other demands of the Congress is known one way or the other.

Sirdar Ujjal Singh on behalf of the Sikh community addressed a letter to Gandhiji stating that no settlement would be acceptable to them unless their minimum demands which were necessary for their self-protection were guaranteed.

The nucleus to a Hindu-Muslim understanding was laid when Mahatmaji had an informal talk with H. H. The Aga Khan at the Ritz Hotel.

Strength of Legislatures

The proceedings of the Federal Structure Committee were carried on also during the second week at which some points of fundamental interest regarding federation such as, the number of seats to be allotted in the Federal Legislature and the financial aspect of the federation scheme were discussed in detail. On the 23rd September, discussion regarding the number of seats was initiated, in the course of which varying proposals for the strength and composition of the Federal Legislature were made ranging from 600 members of the Lower House and 400 of the Upper House advocated by Mr. Joshi to 250 and 100 or 150 respectively contemplated by Sir Akbar Hydari.

Regarding the proportion of representation, British Indian speakers generally advocated that this should be arranged on a population basis.

Sir Akbar Hydari outlined a concrete scheme for the representation of Princes based on one-third representation in the Lower House of 150.

Sir Akbar's scheme contemplated one seat each for all the 21, 19 and 17 gun States, totalling 24, an allocation of 12 seats to the remaining States grouped on a territorial basis and the distribution of the remaining

fourteen among major States which Sir A. Hydari understood, claimed special representation.

Sir Mirza Mahomed Ismail, speaking on behalf of Jodhpur and Jaipur, in addition to Mysore, again advocated the appointment of a Sub-Committee to come to binding decisions on this matter. Sir Mahomed contemplated that the Sub-Committee should submit a report to the British Government through the Viceroy and the States not accepting its findings should remain outside the Federation.

Sir S. Hoare, who emphasised that he did not desire to enter into details at present, declared himself as strongly in favour of an All-India Federation as when the Princes first made the proposal.

Sir S. Hoare emphasised that such Federation implied, firstly, a definite federal foundation and secondly, the existence of definite federal organ to carry out duties. Sir S. Hoare said that he regarded as one of the conditions of an effective All-India Federation sufficient representation and effective participation of the Princes at a reasonably early date as one of the absolute conditions of the constitution and indicated that he thought the suggestion made of fifty-one per cent of the total States' populations rather small.

Having sounded a caution against making the Chambers unmanageably large he referred to the question of the States' proportionate representation in accordance with the number of States federating. Sir S. Hoare said that that seemed to be the logical viewpoint, but it must be remembered that by creating a federation they were bringing together two separate interests. Sir S. Hoare believed the Princes would feel that they had placed themselves under a disadvantage

if they entered a federation without adequate voting strength.

He concluded by pointing out that he was anxious to avoid laying down hard and fast conditions at the present stage.

The discussions of the morning of the 24th was also devoted to a review of the question of the strength and composition of the Federal Chambers.

Bikaner and Mysore

H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner, at the outset, uttered a warning against taking the views expressed by Sir Akbar Hydari and Mirza Sir Ismail as interpreting the views of the States as a whole or even a majority of the States for whom he claimed to speak. He said that nothing was more likely to cause a split among the States or wreck a federation than the acceptance of this view of their declarations.

After the Maharaja of Bikaner had challenged Mirza Sir Ismail's statement that the settlement of the allocation of seats was impossible among the States, Sir Ismail intervened and pointed out that his view was supported by Baroda, Hyderabad, Mysore, and Jaipur.

Bikaner said that the resolution of the Standing Committee of Chamber of Princes passed in Bombay in July was still the view of the majority of the States. Bikaner stressed the need for adequate representation of smaller States and took the view that the suggestion for referring the allocation of seats to a Committee was premature at present, since hitherto the States had not had sufficient opportunities of a discussion, but he thought that if agreement on all points was not reached by this means it might eventually be desirable to appoint a representative committee to work in close

association with the Viceroy. He hoped conclusions equitable to all would thereby be reached.

The Maharaja of Bikaner said the States must not be satisfied with less representation than 125 in the Upper Chamber and expressed his personal view that 51 per cent population of the States entering the Federation would not suffice.

Sir T. B. Sapru took the view that the States' actual representation should be dependent on the number of Federating states, the surplus seats remaining vacant.

Sir T. B. Sapru considered it too premature to discuss the requisite percentage of States for federation and emphasised the supreme necessity of bringing a federation into existence leaving the attainment of a perfect constitution to the future.

Federal Finance

On the afternoon of the 24th the subject of Federal finances was taken up.

The main attention in the course of a technical debate was directed to the distinction between Federal and Central Finances.

Sir Provash Mitter urged that it was desirable to put a term, which might be ten years, to this distinction, while Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar advocated the earliest possible abolition of it.

Sir Provash Mitter suggested the appointment of a Sub-Committee to deal with the subject and emphasised the necessity of adhering to two principles, namely, necessity of adequate resources for Federal Government, and, thereafter, the supply to Provinces of the largest amount possible.

Sir P. Mitter advocated one budget for both Federal and Central subjects (the latter being those which ought to be borne by British India alone) but with a pro forma distinction. He suggested in this regard that during the transition period before the distinction disappeared one-half of the income-tax should be allotted to Federal Government.

Sir P. Mitter advocated that eventually the Federal taxation should be wholly indirect, the Provinces having the benefit of all direct taxation.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar declared that in the transfer from Central to Federal one of the first steps was the abolition of the financial powers of the Secretary of State and the substitution for it of control by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar pointed out that of India's public debt 1001 crores was covered by assets, dead weight being 172 crores. He said that the right course would be to federalise the part covered by assets leaving the remainder a charge on the ordinary general revenues, but certain charges, like the expenditure on Frontier defences and pension charges, must be allocated between the Provinces, States and British Government. He appealed to the States and British Indians not to cramp the Federal Government in the matter of direct taxation and laid stress on the necessity of avoiding discrimination and so render possible a breakdown of the internal tariff walls.

Federal Finance Sub-Committee

On the 25th the Federal finance Committee was appointed by the Federal Structure Committee. The following were the members :

Lord Peel (Chairman).

Sir Akbar Hydari.

Sir Mirza M. Ismail.

Dewan Bahadur V. T. Krishnamachari.

Col. Haksar.

Sir Sultan Ahmed.

Dr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar.

Sir Manekji Dadabhoy.

Mr. Oliver Stanley.

Mr. Pethick Lawrence and

Mr. Elliott.

The Sub-Committee's terms of reference were:—

To examine and report upon the general principles on which the financial resources and obligations of India should be apportioned between the Federation of British Indian units and the States.

A number of speakers participated in the discussion regarding the distribution of financial resources. Opinion generally favoured the restriction of the Federal income to indirect taxation though both Sir M. Dadabhoy and Mr. Joshi did not agree with this view and urged that there should be no constitutional limitation of the Federal Government's powers in this direction.

Mr. Joshi expressed the opinion that the proposal would cause extravagance since pressure for economy was only exercised when the increase of income-tax was contemplated.

Sir M. Shafi, while reserving his opinion generally until the sub-committee had reported, argued against the distinction, between Federal and Central Finance.

The need of abolishing the States tributes which Sardar Ujjal Singh described as anachronism was stressed by several speakers.

The desirability of avoiding internal trade barriers was also the subject of special reference.

Other Aspects

On the scheme of federal finance Sir Mirza indicated the general principles to be kept in view, namely (1) internal trade barriers should as far as possible be avoided. This was doubtless the ideal to be aimed at, but in view of the existing rights it cannot obviously be insisted upon. (2) The authority entitled to the proceeds of a tax should collect it by its own agency, in other words, legislation and administration in fiscal matters should go together. (3) As a rule Federal taxes should be indirect and provincial taxes, direct, but this would be subject to conditions: (a) indirect taxation having social as well as revenue objects for example, excise on alcohol and narcotics should belong to the units of the Federation, (b) direct and indirect taxation should be co-ordinated so that the scheme of taxation as a whole would be well balanced. If additional revenue were found necessary hereafter he suggested a Corporation tax or similar impost subject to the necessary financial adjustment in particular units.

The Federal Finance Committee was postponed till Monday next. The Minorities Committee also was to meet on Monday the 28th September, under the Chairmanship of the Premier. The Federal Structure Committee was likewise postponed till Monday.

CHAPTER IX

THE FEDERAL FINANCE COMMITTEE

OF all the various subjects taken up for discussion by the Round Table Conference, that of Federal Finance was the one which is said to have obtained the greatest measure of agreement among the delegates. Mr. A. Rangaswamy Iyengar, was the chief spokesman on behalf of the British Indian delegation and Sir Mirza M. Ismail, spoke at some length in which he emphasized chiefly the question of the abolition of tributes. The most noteworthy person whose speech and attitude threatened to endanger the proceedings not only of the Finance Sub-Committee but also of the Main Federal Structure Committee was Sir Akbar Hydari, who though professing heartily his adherence to the idea of federation, refused to accept it till the financial implications connected with it were completely threshed out and determined. This attitude on his part was the result or possibly even the cause of the Finance Committee recommending in their report the appointment of an Expert Committee to go in detail into the question of Federal finance with definite terms of reference as their basis of investigation. This recommendation along with the others also unanimously agreed to by members of the Sub-Committee, when brought for discussion in the Federal Structure Committee gave rise to grave issues which threatened to obstruct further progress of work. Mahatmaji was sorely grieved at the further delay that will be caused in the materialisation of the federation idea as the time required for the proposed Expert Committee's work was conceived to

be at least twelve months. Several other leading members of the Federal Structure Committee supported Mahatmaji in his proposal to abandon the idea of the Experts' Committee altogether and refer back the report to the Finance Committee. Eventually Mahatmaji's firm stand and persuasive speech induced Sir Akbar Hydari's group to reconsider their position and after an informal conference, a compromise was effected, by which the Expert Committee was to work on definite terms of reference without in any way prejudicing the acceptance of the Federal scheme by the States.

After consideration of the darft questionnaire, the main topics which were taken for discussion by the Sub-Committee were the question of debts, states contributions, federal services, federal budget, taxes, and revenue from customs and communications.

Mr. Aiyengar's Memorandum

At the outset Mr. A. Rangaswamy Aiyangar made some concrete proposals regarding federal finance about which he submitted a memorandum for consideration of the members. He claimed that the debts existing before the formation of the Federation are Federal liabilities and proposed one common Federal budget based on the removal of internal customs barriers, making Federal communications, Posts, Telegraphs and Railways purely self-supporting and not using railway profits to relieve taxation which should be borne equally by all parts of the Federation.

Federal revenue, according to the memorandum, should mainly consist of indirect taxes, but access to additional direct sources is essential owing to possible

changes in economic policy and prospects of customs revenue.

The memorandum classified customs duties, with the corresponding excise duties, supertax on companies and commercial stamps as Federal sources and land revenue and excise duties on articles taxed for social purposes and non-commercial stamps as Provincial.

Railways being self-supporting, the Provinces and the States are permitted to levy a maximum terminal tax of three per cent enabling the States to give up internal customs and the Provinces to give up local octroi.

The question of the abolition of tributes was first originated by Mr. Aiyangar and with his support, Sir Mirza M. Ismail, made out a strong case for its abolition.

The British India delegation was unanimous that payment of tributes, under whatever name, savoured of the feudal regime and should find no place under the Federal system.

Lord Peel's Speech

Lord Peel, the Chairman of the Federal Finance Sub-Committee in presenting the report for adoption by the Federal Structure Committee, said that the Sub-Committee had done its best to harmonise the financial operations with the main lines of constitutional policy which the Federal Committee was now laying down and referring to the recommendation for the appointment of an Expert Committee, Lord Peel said that it would require months of work.

Lord Peel pointed out that when India's debt was thoroughly investigated it would probably be found that India had assets almost, if not entirely equal to the

whole of her debt. He believed that that was unparalleled, in respect of any other country.

Sub-Committee's Recommendation

The recommendations of the Committee are briefly as follows :

Regarding the existing debt, if the Expert Committee found all the obligations covered by the assets, the whole of the pre-Federation debt should be taken over by the Federation. The Sub-Committee does not rule out the possibility of finding a certain portion of this debt equitably classifiable as a Central and not a Federal charge. The Sub-Committee has set out the initial classification of revenue between the Federal Government and the Provincial units at the outset. Provincial heads of revenue comprise land revenue, excise on alcohol, narcotics and drugs, stamps (with the possible exception of commercial stamps), forests and Provincial commercial undertakings as also succession duties and terminal taxes, if they are levied. Further the first seven taxes in the present first schedule to the Scheduled Tax Rules should be Provincial. Under the scheme now proposed, the problem of residuary powers of taxation would seem to disappear. Regarding taxes which have not been hitherto contemplated in India, it is suggested that the right to levy them should rest in the Federation, but the Federal Government is empowered to assign the right in particular cases to the constituent units. Trust duties whether in the British Indian Provinces or the States should be specifically forbidden and the Provinces should be debarred from levying internal customs. No form of taxation should be levied by any unit on the property of the Federal Government

Income-tax and Tributes.

The Sub-Committee is agreed that Income-tax should be collected from the whole of British India by one centralized administrative service, the net proceeds being re-distributed to the Provinces. The criteria of allocation should be reported on by the proposed Expert Committee. Should a substantial Federal deficit arise, it must be met by contributions from the Provinces. Regarding cash contributions from the Indian States now payable, the Sub-Committee holds that there is no place for contributions of a feudal nature under the Federation. Only the probability of the lack of Federal resource at the outset prevents the Committee from recommending their immediate abolition. They should be wiped out '*pari passu*' with Provincial contributions.

The Sub-Committee recommends that in cases in which real hardship is inflicted by the relative magnitude of the burden, there should be a remission forthwith of a part of the contribution, the idea being that contributions exceeding five per cent of the total revenue of the State should be remitted straightaway. Regarding Ceded territories, the Expert Committee should examine the whole question and pronounce an opinion on the equities of taxation in each case. It is laid down that the financial adjustments in respect of Indian State forces must be conditioned by efficiency, etc. In the case of Maritime States, the customs question should be determined by a close examination of treaties and engagements, and by negotiation for a "*quid pro quo*" surrender of the rights found to be subsisting now.

Definite limits on the borrowing powers of constituent units are suggested including non-external

borrowing without the consent of the Federal Government. The Expert Committee should be bifurcated, one part dealing mainly with questions dealing with Indian States.

Expert Committee

The Sub-Committee recommends finally that an inquiry by the Expert Committee should be undertaken in two parts possibly under a common chairman.

The principal object of the first inquiry should be a general survey of the problem and the examination of:

- pre-Federation debt,
- service of Central charges,
- the classification of revenues as Federal or Provincial,
- the allocation of income-tax between Provinces,
- the basis for Provincial contributions and
- the question of future borrowing.

The second inquiry should relate mainly to:

- the States and the review of States contributions,
- the value of Ceded territories and
- the existing rights of States with a view to suggesting an arrangement for their commutation.

The Sub-Committee also recommends that the question of the financial value to the Federation of State forces should be taken up between the Federal financial and military authorities and individual States.

The Debate

Sir T. B. Sapru questioning as to when the Expert Committee was supposed to finish its work, Lord Peel said that if the appointment was made soon the results of the Committee's enquiry could be embodied in the Constitutional Act. Sir A. Hydari said that the States'

Delegation had taken a united attitude that until the report of the Expert Finance Committee was available they would be unable to say whether they would enter the Federation or not.

Replying to Lord Sankey, Sir A. Hydari agreed that it was desirable that a time should be fixed within which the States should make up their minds regarding their entering the Federation. He thought that the Expert Committee should complete its work in about 12 months. The States would then be in a position to say whether they were satisfied with the scheme of Federal Finance. All other salient features should then be ready so that the States would be able to come to a decision.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru thought that the Finance Sub-Committee's report itself was so excellent that there must be one explanation for the attitude taken by Sir Akbar Hydari on behalf of the Princes.

Mahatmaji dreaded the postponements involved mittee had aimed too high and had unconsciously thrown an apple of discord in their midst. It should not be beyond the power of the Sub-Committee to frame an elementary scheme agreeable to all including the States.

Mahatmajec dreaded the postponements involved in the Finance Sub-Committee's report. The Conference had been formed to shoulder a particular burden and should manfully meet the call and not throw its responsibility on further committees.

Unless they approached the task in this manner they would never see light from what appeared to him impenetrable darkness.

Lord Peel's Explanation

After the debate in the Federal Structure Committee, informal conversations were set afoot between members of the two different groups standing for and against the appointment of the Expert Committee which led to no definite results. At a further meeting of the Federal Structure Committee Lord Peel explained that the length of time that the Expert Committee would take to complete its enquiries had been exaggerated as had also the extent of the tasks with which the experts would have to deal. He hoped that they would agree to setting up an Expert Committee which was needed to work out the exact calculations and figures that arose from the acceptance of the principles in the report.

The Federal Government would have such an immense amount of work before it that it would be grateful if as many of these questions as possible could be decided beforehand. Three or four months devoted to the work by the Expert Committee would certainly not be wasted for it would fill in further details of the scheme and increase confidence. He strongly urged Mahatma Gandhiji not to press for further investigation by a Sub-Committee which might run the risk of breaking up the compromise reached after a very careful discussion and a great deal of give and take.

The Compromise

Lord Peel, outlining the compromise, pointed out that the first committee would investigate questions connected with the States' contributions, Ceded territories, position of Maritime States and similar points and the second committee would be a fact-finding committee to be appointed in India consisting of officials familiar

with finance whose duties would include a general estimate of the financial position of the Federation. He expected the Committee to do its work very quickly.

Lord Peel said that certain questions could be only decided in the light of the facts found by that Committee. The parties concerned would then have to be consulted and Government should be prepared, before the Round Table Conference closed, to make proposals on the procedure to that end.

Sir A. Hydari endorsed Lord Peel's proposals.

Sir Samuel Hoare, hoped that, now that they had reduced the points of difference to such a minimum they would agree to Lord Peel's proposal to accept the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee on that basis.

Mahatmaji confessed to serious misgivings about the result of the committee, though it was less open to objection owing to the curtailment of its scope. He was, therefore, inclined to support the proposal that the matter should be taken up at a later stage but desired to record his objections.

Lord Sankey thought that the Committee had taken a long step forward.

Lord Sankey congratulated the members on the tact and good sense displayed.

The Committee then adjourned.

CHAPTER X

THE MINORITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

WHILE in India, the Hindu-Muslim problem remained as the greatest obstacle towards achieving a national unity, in London, during the proceedings of the Round Table Conference, it resolved itself into the more seri-

ous problem of all the Minorities. A separate sub-committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to deal with the thorny problem and arrive at a solution agreeable to all concerned. But, as India's misfortune would have it, the problem after taxing the utmost time, energy, tact and patience of everybody concerned, baffled a final solution. The result was, that India was shown up in all its ugly political nakedness to the world and the British die-hards obtained a powerful handle with which to turn India's destiny at their own will.

Premier's Speech

The Committee opened its proceedings with a speech by the Chairman, which he began most altruistically saying that "the philosophers of India formed a sure foundation for building up harmony between the races since they looked at the world not in a merely abstract way but as something essentially composed of differences, yet essentially calling for harmony of difference. That was the problem before the Round Table Conference."

"We do not want to change the Hindu, the Moslem, the Sikh. I hope you do not want to change us. But we do want to find means whereby we can co-operate for the good of each other and of the whole world. That is the spirit in which I take the chair."

Appealing to the delegates to agree among themselves on a solution, the Premier said, he considered it a problem internal to the Indian problem and, rejecting the suggestion of Government's arbitration, he said any arbitration would probably be unacceptable to all and a "most unsatisfactory solution". He asked the delegates to imagine the fate of the arbitrator when they

returned to India. He said, "I have often been a scapegoat. I am willing to be one again if it is good and necessary. But I think you should become your own scapegoats, for, if you are responsible you will and must work any agreement out." He said the delegates themselves should undertake the responsibility but if he could assist he would only be too glad to do so.

Mr. MacDonald said their problem was as important as it was difficult. It had baffled them last time and he appealed to all delegates to reach an agreement.

Other Speeches

After the Premier, the Aga Khan mentioned that he and other Moslems were meeting Mr. Gandhi that night and the suggestion was made that the Committee should adjourn to allow discussions to occur.

Some representatives of the smaller Minorities indicated alarm that a matter of such importance should be left in the hands of the two larger communities.

Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that they were unable to bind other sections and said that representatives of smaller Minorities would put forward their claims, irrespective of the claims of Hindus and Moslems.

Dr. Ambedkar added that whoever claimed or gave weightage would be unable to do so at the expense of his minority.

Col. Gidney expressed similar sentiments.

The Premier said that he fully realised the position and pointed out that the Minorities Committee was a body charged with dealing with the question.

The Committee comprised all sections and all Minorities and had to make an ultimate agreement.

The Premier expressed the opinion that it was useless adjourning unless, whilst the two larger communi-

nities were meeting, representatives of smaller Minorities also met and tried to compose their differences and reach an understanding.

Adjournment

The Committee therefore was adjourned on the understanding that the smaller Minorities should meet and try to reach a settlement and arrange to draw up a statement on their position.

On the same evening a meeting of the Hindu delegates was held at the residence of Pandit Malaviya. Mr. Sastri, Mr. Jayakar, Raja Narendranath. Dr. Moonji, Sirdar Ujjal Singh and others were present. No definite plan was adopted. But it was decided to place the respective cases of the Hindus and the Sikhs before the Committee without reservation.

On the next evening Gandhiji met the entire Moslem delegation at the Ritz Hotel, the Aga Khan's residence. Sir Ali Imam also took part in the conversations. The Moslem delegates advanced fresh proposals containing a combination of joint and separate electorates. Gandhiji stressed the necessity of including Dr. Ansari in the Minorities Committee, to which the Moslems did not give a definite reply.

Mahatmaj's untiring efforts towards arriving at a communal solution is evident from the fact that on the same day he conferred with the Sikh delegates, Sirdars Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh. On the next day, he conferred with non-Muslim delegates Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. R. Srinivasan, Dr. Datta, Col. Gidney, Mr. Joshi, Mr. Shiva Rao and Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao. He discussed their position and demands.

Later, Dr. Datta and Col. Gidney, on behalf of the other Minorities interviewed the Aga Khan as the head

of the biggest Minority to arrange for a joint meeting of all the Minorities to discuss their position and demands.

In a further talk with the representatives of the lesser minorities Gandhiji said that the Congress was opposed to communal representation, but, if driven to it, would agree only in national interests. He also expressed the opinion that the committee as constituted would never solve the problem in which event, he indicated his intention of announcing his withdrawal from it.

Gandhiji favoured an Indian Arbitration Committee, appointed by Indians. He was for independence with a clause in the constitution providing India to settle her own communal problem.

Informal Committee

An informal committee was appointed to discuss and settle communal differences with Mahatmaji as Chairman and pending its results, the Minorities Sub-Committee was adjourned. The informal committee opened at St. James Palace.

At the outset, Mr. Pannirselvam and Dr. Ambedkar put forward a strong plea for separate representation. Dr. Ambedkar repudiated the suggestion that the Untouchables were Hindus and said that Moslems and Sikhs were nearer to Hindus than were the Untouchables.

They were warmly supported by Sir T. B. Saprú, Sir A. P. Patro, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar and Mr. Ramachandra Rao.

Sardar Sampuram Singh opposed any special representation to the Depressed Classes on the ground that they were being rapidly absorbed by other communi-

ties and it would be most invidious to perpetuate this kind of special representation by statute.

Mahatma Gandhi on behalf of the Congress also opposed special representation to the Depressed Classes. He said he would support special representation only for Muslims and Sikhs as a necessary evil.

Mahatmaji finally warned the Conference, that if special representation were conceded, it might be conceded to all the Minorities.

Pandit Malaviya supported Gandhiji.

Further Adjournment

As soon as the Minorities Sub-Committee met, Gandhiji proposed an adjournment until 8th October. He said that the Aga Khan and other Moslem delegates and he had come to the conclusion that an adjournment would be an advantage as little headway had been made in conversations with the Moslems and other delegates but time had been too short.

Gandhiji undertook to report the progress to the Committee when it next met and not to request for further adjournment thereafter.

He hoped that he would be able to report a settlement by the end of the week. He was an irrepressible optimist and experience had taught him that, when the horizon appeared blackest, there were always good reasons for hope. He assured the Committee that every human endeavour to reach a settlement would be made.

H. H. the Aga Khan formally seconded the proposal.

Views of Minorities

Dr. Ambedkar made it clear that he would not object to an adjournment if it would lead to a settlement but desired further information regarding the composi-

tion of the Committee and inquired if the Depressed Classes were to be represented.

Gandhiji said, "Without a doubt".

Dr. Ambedkar continued that he must consider whether any would object to him and some of his colleagues serving on the Committee in view of Mr. Gandhi's opposition to the political recognition for the depressed classes and other smaller communities.

Sir H. Gidney associated himself with Dr. Ambedkar's attitude saying that he was in the unfortunate position of being refused recognition by Mr. Gandhi.

Sir H. Gidney said that there was no doubt in his mind, after yesterday's meeting with Mr. Gandhi, that the Lahore resolution recognised, for the purposes of political representation only two Minority communities namely, Moslems and Sikhs, who were recognised on the traditional and historic grounds.

Sir Henry thought it might possibly be considered impertinence on his part to claim recognition on the same grounds, but he asked Mr. Gandhi to make it clear that the proposed Committee would include representatives of the communities which had already received recognition by inclusion in the Minorities Committee.

Mr. Pannirselvam expressed similar sentiments.

Hindu and Moslem Views

Dr. Moonji suggested that Dr. Ambedkar and Sir H. Gidney had taken too seriously the suggestion that the Committee would concern itself only with Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs and pointed out that even Hindus in the Punjab and Bengal were minorities and therefore had to watch their own interests.

Sir M. Shafi rose to remove a misapprehension and said that the Committee would not be a sub-committee of the Minorities Committee but each group, including Anglo-Indians and depressed classes, would be invited to select a few representatives to explore whether it was possible to reach a satisfactory settlement and so lighten the burden of the Minorities Committee.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, speaking as a completely disinterested member representing neither a minority nor a special interest, appealed to the Minorities not to create difficulties and "not to cross the bridges before they came to them."

When Dr. Ambedkar said he wanted to know exactly what the Committee was to consider the Aga Khan interjected, "It will be a settlement for all."

Dr. Ambedkar stated that, in that case, he was willing to allow the motion to pass without protest.

Gandhiji feared that Dr. Ambedkar and Sir H. Gidney were unnecessarily nervous. Nobody need fear that he would not receive an opportunity of expressing his views. The object was to see whether, by heart-to-heart conversations, misunderstandings could be removed.

Sardar Ujjal Singh, Dr. Datta and Sir Hubert Carr welcomed the motion, the latter remarking that Europeans would favour any means of reaching a solution which must precede a settlement of the other questions in which they were interested.

The motion for adjournment was then carried the Premier remarking that it was understood that the interval would not be wasted, but that all would pledge themselves to devote the time to informal conferences, which, he hoped, would be most valuable and fruitful.

Congress Position

Throughout the proceedings of the unofficial Conference Gandhiji found no way but to stand against communal representation and separate electorates as according to his ideas, if one minority were granted the privilege, all other minorities (which were too many in India) would be equally entitled to it and would claim the same.

Gandhiji expressed a sense of unreality if all claims were taken at their face value and said that he felt cramped and hemmed in amidst the plethora of claims. Though he was not idle, he had hitherto found no light, but, if he saw light, he would act. He finally said that the Conference may take more time if necessary, but for his part, he was unable to compromise on fundamentals.

H. H. The Aga Khan suggested that the problem may be tackled province by province. The other delegates stood firmly on their respective stands.

At the close of the proceedings, it was evident that the problem was insoluble by that method and that an arbitrator like Lord Sankey might be asked to undertake the task. The idea of arbitration had gained considerable ground among the delegates.

Mrs. Naidu's Suggestion

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu suggested that an arbitration board of from three to five members may be appointed from among the members of the Minorities Sub-Committee empowered to decide the matter finally. But representatives of orthodox Hindu and Sikh sections favoured the appointment of an outside tribunal. There were many eminent Indian High Court Judges both Hindu and Moslem in England at the time, who, in con-

junction with some British Judges might be able to look into the differences with a detached and purely judicial eye to whose decision it might be left, rather than to politicians.

Moslem delegates, who had discussed the matter among themselves prior to going to the Palace, stated that they would prefer a committee from among the members of the Minorities Committee, their main reasons being that the adjudication of their differences by an outside tribunal would not redound to India's credit and would be in itself a confession of failure by the informal Conference. The ensuing discussion was fruitless and the Conference broke up without reaching a decision.

It was understood that the opinion prevailing among a number of delegates on the composition of the Committee of three pointed to the election of Mr. Gandhi, the Aga Khan and one representative of the lesser Minorities.

Maulana Shaukat Ali's Speech

In contrast to the difficulties, uncertainties and vain gropings in the dark of the members of the Minorities Sub-Committee, the self-assurance exhibited in Maulana Shaukat Ali's speech delivered at a meeting of the Royal Empire Society is truly remarkable. He prefixed his statement of the Mussalman case by remarking that last year he had lost his brother, while in London and to-day he had received news of the death of his daughter in India.

The Maulana declared that he did not fear the Hindus or a combination of Hindus and Englishmen. He laid stress that he was genuinely anxious for an honourable peace in India satisfactory to all classes,

adding that, as a cricketer, he always hit boundaries and was content with nothing less.

He went on to say that it was probable (which he amended to "possible") that the Conference might not be a success.

If Mr. Gandhi went back to India to-morrow they must still endeavour to make the Conference a success. He wanted the Minorities to have interest in the administration, but was not going to turn Mussalman majorities in two provinces into minorities.

If peace with Hindus could be achieved well and good: but if not he was not going back to India but would make peace with England.

Failure

Gandhiji grieved at the failure of his Committee to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problem especially as he believed that the Government could do far more than they were then doing to speed up an agreement. "If we knew in a definite measure" he pleaded, "that we are going to get what we want, we should hesitate fifty times before we threw it away in a sinful wrangle, as it would be if we are told that the getting of it would depend upon the ability of the present delegation to produce an agreed solution. The solution can be the *crown* of a Swaraj Constitution and not its *foundation*." But the Prime Minister's response to this appeal was thought to be not satisfactory.

The unofficial Committee's proceedings dragged on without arriving at any tangible result. The main point of difference was the personnel of the arbitration board, the Moslems refusing to consider any other scheme but the one originally proposed and the Hindus and Sikhs demanding an outside personnel.

Punjab Redistribution

Meanwhile a scheme for the redistribution of the Punjab was brought forward by Sir G. Corbett, by which the Punjab was divided into three exclusive zones, the Moslem, Sikh and Hindu, where each of them will be assured of a majority on the population basis without the necessity of statutory safeguards. Sir G. Corbett's scheme was not evolved with a view to communal satisfaction, but purely on linguistic, ethnical and historical grounds but it was supposed to satisfy the communal demands at the same time.

"He says that it is fair to assume that in any rational scheme of redistribution the Ambala Division, less the Simla District and north-west corner of Ambala District, should be separated on these two grounds from the Punjab and amalgamated with the United Provinces which might also be divided into two provinces.

Though this matter is beyond the scope of Sir G. Corbett's memorandum, Sir Geoffrey considers that redistribution on these lines will satisfy the claims of all the three communities since Moslems, being 62 per cent of the total population of the redistributed Punjab, will be assured of a majority in the Legislature through territorial constituencies with joint electorates without reservation of seats. The Sikhs' preference for joint electorates will be satisfied and they will no longer require separate electorates or weightage. Further their numerical strength will be relatively increased while the two principles on which Hindus are willing to compromise will be satisfied since there will be no statutory majority by reservation of seats and no weightage at the expense of a minority community."

The Sikh delegates opposed this scheme and Sardar Ujjal Singh alternatively presented to Gandhiji a scheme of redistribution of the Punjab by which Rawalpindi and Multan divisions minus Lyalpur and Montgomery districts should be detached from the Punjab and amalgamated with the Frontier Province in which case Sikhs would not claim weightage or reservation of seats.

Cables from India

Meanwhile cables from India were being sent by various communal organisations to their respective representatives asking them to stand firm on the communal issues. Mahatmaji's attitude was characterised as giving a blank cheque to Moslems which was criticised by the Hindu Mahasabha. Some Depressed Classes organisations in India cabled to Gandhiji that they had entire confidence in him and expressing their desire to accept joint electorates, while others cabled to Dr. Ambedkar promising support and protesting against Gandhiji's betrayal of their interests.

Further efforts were made for arriving at a communal settlement by Mr. V. J. Patel, who proposed to tackle the problem, province by province under the direction of H. H. The Aga Khan and Gandhiji, who may be empowered to appoint arbitrators, thus narrowing down to a minimum the disputed points. Mr. Sastri and Mirza Sir Ismail also tried their best to effect a settlement but all to no purpose.

Minorities' Agreement

Meanwhile the Moslems and the lesser Minorities were carrying on negotiations among themselves which resulted in an agreement being drawn and signed by their representatives.

The agreement specified the proportion of the representation the various communities are to receive in the legislatures on the basis of which there shall be weightage for Minorities, but no majority community. shall be placed in the position of a minority. The Muslims in Bengal and the Punjab will, accordingly, receive 51 per cent representation. The agreement also set out the special claims of Muslims, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Depressed Classes and Indo-Christians.

The agreement setting out the claims of the Minority communities which was signed by the Aga Khan, Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Pannirselvam, Sir H. Gidney and Sir H. Carr, contained eleven clauses detailing the civic, religious and political rights and safeguards and there were further sections giving the special claims of Muslims, Depressed Classes, Anglo-Indians and Europeans.

Final Meeting

It was a gloomy meeting of the Minorities Committee that was held on the 13th November.

H. H. The Aga Khan handed in a document to the Premier embodying the Minorities Agreement. Sirdar Ujjal Singh also handed in a document setting forth the Sikh viewpoint. A number of other delegates including Sir P. C. Mitter, Dr. Ambedkar, Raja Narendranath Dr. Datta, Sir H. Gidney and Dr. Moonji likewise handed in documents.

In his opening speech to the Minorities Committee the Premier reiterated the Government's intention to stand by his January declaration. A declaration of Government policy would be made to the Plenary Session next week, to which the Premier would report the

failure of the Minorities Committee to come to an agreement.

After the Premier's opening speech, Sardar Ujjal Singh immediately protested against the Minorities Agreement as a negation of democratic principles.

Mr. Joshi also, with the support of Mr. Shiva Rao and Mr. Giri, said that they disagreed with the proposals. The workers were not willing to have their ranks divided in order to get special representation.

Further disagreement was expressed by Mr. Datta who said that portions of the community, he represented, would not be bound by the agreement, which, in turn, was defended by Sir H. Gidney and Sir H. Carr.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Begum Shah Nawaz upheld the women's example in declining special representation though Mrs. Subbarayan pointed out that a large body of educated women did not support this view, holding that the presence of women in the legislatures should be ensured.

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad appealed to the Premier to take a hand in the settlement of the communal question and allow the work of the Federal Structure Subcommittee to proceed.

Dr. Moonji affirmed that the Hindu Maha Sabha would never agree to separate electorate or weightage being taken from the Hindus. He declared that the Hindu Mahasabha would never agree to the establishment of a permanent communal majority by law in Punjab and Bengal.

Gandhiji declared that the agreement was not designed to achieve responsible Government and the Congress would rather wander indefinitely in the wilderness than lend itself to a proposal under which the

hardy tree of freedom and Responsible Government would never grow.

Premier's Offer

The Premier winding up the proceedings offered to arbitrate on the communal question if all the delegates together desired him to do it.

In response to the Premier's offer to arbitrate, letters were despatched by the most important non-Muslim leaders agreeing to arbitration by the Premier on communal problems generally or Hindu-Muslim-Sikh questions only.

Mahatmaji and Sir T. B. Saprú wrote separate letters accepting the Premier's offer, Mahatmaji in connection with the latter question only, while Sir Saprú for the former question.

Pandit Malaviya and six other delegates wrote a letter to the Premier in the same strain.

Another letter signed by Mr. Sastri, Sir C. Setalvad, Mr. Joshi, Sir P. Sethna, Mrs. Subbarayan, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Mr. Ramachandra Rao and Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar was sent asking Mr. MacDonald to arbitrate on the communal issues.

Efforts were made to obtain the signatures of Muslim delegates but they refused to sign on the ground that all the sections of the British Indian delegation have not signed it.

The Minorities Sub-Committee was then wound up.

CHAPTER XI

THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE (Contd.)

By the middle of October, it was found that the Federal Structure Committee proceedings had not gone far. The main subjects taken up for discussion were,

the constitution of Federal Legislature, allotment of seats therein, method of election and distribution of Federal finance. The Finance Committee's recommendations had found favour with the majority of delegates and thanks to the expert knowledge and clear elucidation of the subject given by Mr. A. Rangaswami Aiyanger, who was the principal speaker in the Subcommittee as well as in the debate that followed in the Federal Structure Committee, the report was accepted with some modifications. Regarding the other subjects connected with the federation scheme, there was a great diversity of opinion, the Princes themselves not being unanimous, though the delegates representing British India stood very much united. H. H. the Maharaja of Dholpur brought forward a new scheme of federation and H. H. the Maharaja of Indore brought another in a modified form. But these schemes do not appear to have found much favour with the other States delegates nor with the British Indians. Mirza Sir Mahomad Ismail, among the States' delegates, showed the greatest agreement with the British Indian delegates and generally stood by Mahatma Gandhi. The progress of the federal discussions during the middle of October may be easily gathered from a telegram despatched by the States' Peoples' representatives in England to their publicity officer at Ranpur under date October 16 :

"Mahatmaji asked us to show our materials about the internal condition in the leading States. The delegation prepared a "Bikaner Booklet" and presented it to Mahatmaji, who asked us to furnish materials about other States also. We are interviewing prominent American journalists on the 15th and seeing the *Times* representative next.

FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE (Contd.) 97

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru asked Sir A. Hydari for an assurance that there was no change in the Princes' attitude. He said that the report of the Federal Finance Sub-Committee itself was so excellent that there must be some explanation for the recent attitude adopted by Sir A. Hydari on behalf of the Princes. Sir A. Hydari, the Maharaja of Bikaner and the Nawab of Bhopal said that they stood unflinchingly by Federation, but must know beforehand what it meant financially. Mahatmaji supported the Princes, but suggested a discussion on broad principles instead of going into the details.

Sir Ismail Mirza asked for the immediate abolition of tributes.

We interviewed Mahatmaji and presented to him a statement on the composition of the Federal Court. He promised to go through it and discuss it with the Princes. The Princes are unwilling to accept Gandhiji's advice.

Mahatmaji, interviewed, told us that if the Princes persist in their present attitude and the committee breaks up British India will demand Swarajya without a Federation."

Regarding the last point Mahatmaji in a special interview to the *Hindu* remarked, that

"Whether the Princes join the federation or not, he was not concerned just as French and Portuguese India are not expected to join the federation. British India is fit for Swaraj. He will press its claims and urge a judicial tribunal if there is no settlement of the communal problem."

False Rumours

Meanwhile, there were rumours and hints to the effect that Government intended to wind up the Round Table Conference with a promise of re-opening discussions in India. This, added to the apparent indifference of the Muslim delegation to the possibility of the breakdown of the Conference and their insistence on

their full demands being conceded before they would agree to any scheme of federation caused much uneasiness in the minds of the other delegates. Though the atmosphere of the Conference was one of utter pessimism and gloom, the results of the general election and the formation of the new Cabinet were awaited to see if any hope could be entertained.

The *Daily Herald's* story giving currency to the above rumour was promptly denied by Sir S. Hoare and the Premier. Sir S. Hoare replying to an observation made by Mahatma Gandhi said,

"On behalf of His Majesty's Government I wish to say that there is no word of truth in that statement and I take the first opportunity of telling my colleagues that nothing is further from Government's mind.

We are perfectly prepared to go on with the work of the Round Table Conference as long as you and we think that useful purpose can be served by our deliberations. We have not the least intention of bringing it to a premature end. Therefore any rumours about a particular date have, as far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, no foundation whatever."

Federal Court

The discussions regarding the formation of a Federal Court was then proceeded with, in which Sir Ismail Mirza took a prominent part. In the course of the discussions Mahatmaji elicited from him an assurance that States subjects were entitled to appeal to the Federal Court against the decisions of their respective judicial authorities.

The Maharaja of Bikaner, who was returning to India under medical advice, expressed agreement with Sir Ismail and said

"It is necessary for me to reiterate my strong faith in the Federation. Even though I will not be here, I hope to do ser-

vice to this Committee and Conference and to the great work before us in India. We should not be disappointed by any measure of disagreement here and there. I do not believe that a settlement of these questions and the drafting of the constitution will be beyond human ingenuity or the statesmanship of His Majesty's Government and British friends".

In the course of the discussion on the subject of a Federal Court, Dr. Ambedkar, speaking for a minority which at present had no rights, thought that it was not impossible that a Provincial Government supported by a communal majority may not be eager to give effect to judgments which were unpalatable.

Mrs. Subbarayan opposed the proposal that the President of the Federal Legislature should be empowered to suspend the discussion of bills relating to fundamental rights pending the opinion of the Federal Court, expressing the opinion that such a course would lead to measures of social reform being blocked.

Gandhiji's Opinion

Mahatmaji regretted that the discussion had hitherto appeared to be based on the distrust of the National (Federal) Government's ability to conduct affairs impartially and also swayed by the communal tangle. Pointing out that the Congress policy was based on trust and confidence, that when India had power, she would show a sense of responsibility and the communal virus would disappear. Mahatmaji appealed for the widest powers for the Supreme Court, which should be the guardian of the rights of all the people in India, whether in the States or elsewhere. He said that the greater the power given to the Federal Court the greater the confidence they would be able to inspire in the world and also in the nation itself.

Mahatmaji did not think that the present constitution should lay down all the details in connection with the Court but should only outline the framework and jurisdiction, points like the number of judges and their salaries being left to the Federal Government to evolve.

It was a fundamental belief of the Congress that India should have its own Privy Council, and if it was to give relief to the poor in matters of the highest importance, should be open to the poorest, which, he thought was impossible for a Privy Council in London. In this matter also Mahatmaji would implicitly trust the judges of India to give wise and unbiassed decisions.

He observed further that the Privy Council in London justly commanded very great regard and respect, but he did not believe that they would be unable to have their own Privy Council, which could command universal esteem. Because England was able to boast of very fine institutions Indians need not be tied down to them. If they had learned anything whatever from England they would learn to erect these institutions. Their beginning might be small, but, if they had strong, true and honest hearts, lack of England's legal traditions would not matter in the slightest.

He therefore, felt that the Federal Court should have the widest possible jurisdiction and should be empowered to try all cases from the four corners of India.

Touching the question of salaries, Mahatmaji expressed the opinion that India would not be able to afford the rates paid in Britain or at present in India but expressed confidence that they would be able to produce sufficient men prepared to live as did the millions of India and still serve the country nobly and well. Legal talent did not have to be bought to remain honest.

He referred in this connection to the examples of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mr. Manmohan Ghosh, Mr. C. R. Das, Mr. Tyabji and a host of others and said that he could name several lawyers of distinction, who if, they had not taken up the national cause, would be occupying High Court benches.

Having again pleaded for the widest jurisdiction Mahatmaji concluded by confessing that he felt that he was labouring under a handicap, for many distinguished lawyers were arrayed against him and probably also the Princes as far as the salaries and jurisdiction were concerned, but he would be guilty of neglecting his duty if he did not give the views which the Congress and he held so strongly

Other Speakers

Sir A. Hydari advocated the appointment of judges by the Crown. He said that the Federal Court should have original and exclusive jurisdiction regarding the interpretation of the constitution but not with regard to the treaties with the Crown. There should be an appeal to the Privy Council.

Mr. Gavin Jones on behalf of the Europeans agreed that the Federal Court was necessary but it was essential to retain the right of appeal from the Federal Court to the Privy Council.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, however, opposed the Privy Council appeals expressing the opinion that from the standpoint of both States and British India it was desirable to establish in India itself India's final National Supreme Court.

The jurisdiction of the Federal Court was discussed in some detail by Mr. Jayakar, who suggested means by which the Court could be used to remove apprehensions

of the minorities. Referring to the Privy Council appeals Mr. Jayakar agreed that the ideal should be a completely self-contained judicial system for India but warned that it might be premature to establish an Indian Privy Council at present.

After the close of the discussions, Lord Sankey intimated that he would submit the three reports on the subjects hitherto discussed, namely Legislature, Finance and Federal Court for the consideration of the committee during next week.

Result of General Election

Meanwhile, the results of the general election were known and the overwhelming Tory majority had deepened the depression among Indian nationalist circles. It was feared that the effect on the Conference will be unfavourable with the possible resurrection of the Simon Report and the Government of India dispatch as the basis of a new scheme, failing the acceptability of a Federal constitution. The prospects of satisfying the Congress demand therefore were considered more remote than ever, specially if Sir John Simon joins the Cabinet.

Debate on Draft Reports

On the resumption of the Federal Structure Committee, the three draft reports of Lord Sankey circulated to the delegates beforehand, were discussed and a general agreement of their terms arrived at.

Lord Sankey, submitting the report, explained that, after approval by the Federal Structure Committee, it would be discussed by the full Conference and hoped that it would eventually form the basis of an Act of Parliament. He emphasised in this connection the influence which a large measure of agreement was likely to

have on the smooth and unanimous passage of the Bill, declaring that if the recommendations were made with the almost unanimous approval of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee and the Conference they must carry great weight with all political parties in India and England.

Changes in the Report

The main changes in the Federal Structure Sub-Committee's report made during this debate comprised the stipulation that it should be impossible for a member to belong simultaneously to the Federal and Provincial Legislature, an agreement that the distribution of seats among the Provinces to the Upper Chamber required further consideration and an addition to the Committee's observations, regarding not making a recommendation about the representation of the Depressed classes, Indian-Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians, of the words "or to the representation of women". This change was made at the instance of Mrs. Subbarayan, as also the alteration of the section dealing with the nominations in order to make it clear that women should be eligible and definite instruction to the Franchise Committee to secure eligibility of a considerable number of women as candidates for the Upper House.

It was also made clear that the age-limit for the Upper House should be applied to candidates and not to voters.

Pandit Malaviya supported by Sir Sultan Ahmad objected to the disqualification of candidates undergoing detention. It was agreed to add to the report that a section of the Committee was opposed to such disqualification.

Mahatmaji through a note submitted to Lord Sankey as it was his day of silence expressed the opinion that he adhered to one chamber as the best, but subject to certain vital modifications, he was prepared to support Sir Mirza Ismail's proposal for a small Upper Chamber consisting of nominated delegates of the Governments of the Federated units provided this Chamber became an advisory body.

No Special Representation

"The Congress wholly opposes special representation to Landlords, Europeans and Indian commerce and Labour. Representatives of these interests should appeal to the common electorate.

"The Congress similarly opposes nomination but specialists should have facility to address the Chamber as required.

"There is much I would like to say with reference to paragraphs about the States, especially on the matter of representation of the States' subjects, but I reserve my opinion for the time being. I adhere to the proposal I have made for indirect election or rather election through delegates using villages as units the scheme being based on adult suffrage to which the Congress is committed."

It was mentioned that a memorandum by the Maharaja of Dholpur outlining the scheme for a States' Confederation and also a note by Sir Ismail Mirza giving his views on the character and size of the Federal Legislature would be printed with the report.

Eventually the reports were agreed to with some modifications. The Federal Structure Committee was adjourned *sine die*.

Fears of Delegates

This adjournment, while there were other important matters yet to be discussed such as the Army, External Relations, Safeguards, etc., was construed as indicating either the Government's acquiescence in the Muslim attitude of blocking further progress till there was a settlement of the Minorities problem or the Premier's intention of meeting prominent members of the Committee next week for the purpose of formulating Government's future policy and inviting discussions thereon at the Committee's Plenary sittings before winding up the Conference. The latter appeared probable owing to the Premier's conversations with leaders.

Meanwhile anxious discussions were proceeding among Indian leaders regarding the latest development in Provincial Autonomy schemes owing to British statesmen canvassing the chances of acceptance by Indians of immediate Provincial Autonomy with Committees working out the details of the Federation, Central Responsibility and Safeguards coupled with the specific promise of their early introduction. The evident hardening of Ministerial attitude owing to Conservatives' domination deeply perturbed Indian circles and helped to unite them in a firm and determined resistance thereto.

Letter to Premier

To make matters clear, it was decided to address a letter to the Prime Minister on the subject. Accordingly a general letter, signed by 27 British Indian delegates was drawn up and despatched to the Prime Minister. It was as follows:

Dear Prime Minister,—“It is with deep concern that we hear rumours to the effect that provincial autonomy will be introduced as a first step in the political recon-

struction of India, leaving federation and responsibility at the centre to follow later.

We have read a statement to the contrary which appeared in the daily press this morning (namely, November 6). The rumours, however, are so strong and persistent that we must ask for leave to place our views before you beyond the possibility of doubt.

The needs of the present situation can be met only by a complete and comprehensive scheme of which responsibility at the Federal centre must be as integral a part as autonomy of the federating units. To divide the scheme into parts and bring into immediate operation one of the parts and postpone the other is to arouse fears of uncertainty and suspicions of the intentions of the Government.

We realise the importance of the Minorities question of which no satisfactory solution has yet been found but at the same time it must not be allowed to block the way of a full and comprehensive scheme of responsible government which alone can provide an adequate settlement of the pressing problem."

We are,

Dear Prime Minister,

Yours Sincerely,

(Sd.) Gandhi, Malaviya, Sastri, Sapru, Sethna, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Jayakar, Ramachandra Rao, Mrs. Subbarayan, Rangaswami Iyengar, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Birla, Jamal Mahomed, Datta, Ujjal Singh, Moonji, Sarojini Naidu, Tambe, Raja Narendranath, Ramaswami Mudaliar, Jadhav, Sampuran Singh, Barroah, Joshi, Giri, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Shiva Rao

Gandhiji for Provincial Autonomy ?

There was an impression among the delegates that Gandhiji was in favour of accepting Provincial Autonomy with certain modifications which gave rise to much uneasiness in their minds, especially as the scheme was particularly repugnant to the prominent delegates among them being Sir T. B. Sapru, Mr. Sastri, Pandit Malaviya, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Setalvad, Mr. Ramachandra Rao and Sir C. Jehangir, who unanimously affirmed that once a scheme of Provincial Autonomy is accepted, the Federation will absolutely recede into the background and it will take a long time to reopen the question. Moreover, to introduce Provincial Autonomy now and Responsibility at the centre at a later stage will involve the introduction of two bills in Parliament, one perhaps in the summer of 1932 and the other dealing with a Federation later still.

Mr. Sastri expressed the opinion that even if Provincial Autonomy was enacted, wisdom lay in postponing the actual inauguration until reforms in the Centre were simultaneously introduced. He added that his misgivings were two-fold, namely, that the interval between Provincial Autonomy and Central Responsibility would create a suspicion in India and afford an opportunity for obstruction and reaction.

Mahatmaji therefore at a conference of delegates fully explained his conception of Provincial Autonomy which differed entirely from what was outlined in the Simon Report and the Government of India dispatch. His main idea contemplated unfettered popular control of all subjects, governors not possessing any reserve powers, while the provinces should be so completely autonomous that interference from the centre in such

matters as internal disorders will be impossible except at the province's request. Moreover the provinces should be free to refuse contributions to the central government if they so desired.

Sir T. B. Saprú observed,

"I am not a friend of Provincial Autonomy without Central Responsibility. "Indeed, unless Central Responsibility on a Federal basis is established, I see grave dangers on political, constitutional and administrative grounds in the mere establishment of Provincial Autonomy which cannot be complete unless its relations to the Central Government are defined. Political India will never be satisfied with mere Provincial Autonomy. Responsibility in the centre and in the Provinces should be established immediately by an Act of Parliament. I can foresee grave dangers to the Federation or any kind of Central Responsibility arising from the plan which leaves it to Provincial Legislatures to determine the machinery of Central or Federal Legislature".

Mr. Jayakar was equally emphatic that any offer of Provincial Autonomy as a first instalment of constitutional reforms should be avoided at all costs. He said,

"I am convinced that it will delay the Federation, if not defeat it altogether. It will also make communalism more rampant and make the entry of the Princes into the Federation more difficult. I am sure that it will not satisfy the political mind of India which is determined on Central Responsibility."

CHAPTER XII

THE ARMY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

CONTRARY to the gloomy expectation entertained by the delegates as a result of adjourning the proceedings of the Federal Structure Committee *sine die* on the previous occasion, a definite turn for the better was

evidenced by the announcement that the Committee would be allowed to proceed on its discussions on the outstanding questions such as the Army, External Relations, etc., which did not really hinge on the solution of the communal problem. This unexpected announcement induced the Moslems to reconsider their objection to taking part in further discussions which they now consented to do, merely reserving in Mr. Jinnah's words, "as an essential condition that until and unless the Muslim demands on safeguards were incorporated in the constitution, it would not be acceptable to them." The cue was taken by the other Minorities who had shared their opposition to the continuance of the Committee's work, with the result that the discussion of the outstanding items, beginning with the Army, was taken up, by the Committee.

A Turn for the Better

This changed attitude on the part of the Minorities coupled with the Government's assurance to continue the proceedings of the Committee till all outstanding subjects were discussed, infused a new hope into the minds of the delegates who went to work in right earnest. The result was, that these questions were thoroughly discussed, most of the delegates taking part in a frank exchange of opinion. The first subject to be taken up was the Army. The subject of the Army was previously discussed in a Conference of leading delegates at the India Office, convened by Sir S. Hoare and later on during informal conversations conducted between delegates. There was a great measure of general agreement among the delegates on these questions so that, when the question was taken up in

the Federal Structure Committee the debate went on quickly and smoothly.

Lord Sankey asked Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar to start the discussion on the Army question. Mr. Aiyengar replied that Sir T. B. Sapru will start. Lord Sankey said "I never know whether Sir T. B. Sapru is what we call the centre forward or full-back. He generally plays full-back".

Lord Sankey, however, in his opening remarks, reminded the Committee that Army, External Affairs, Finance and Commercial Discrimination remained to be discussed and suggested that the first three should be taken up in the next few days.

Lord Sankey, at the outset, emphasized the importance of ascertaining the delegates' views on the four subjects mentioned and reminded the Committee that every word of the Premier's declaration of last January stood even then. He said that unless the delegates' views were known, it would be quite impossible to put these matters into shape for submission to Parliament, though on the subject of finance, he realised that in the present world situation, it might be wise to express opinions in a most general way.

Lord Sankey thought that the discussions need not take very long and thereafter the Premier would be able to make a declaration and wind up the Plenary session.

A debate ensued as to whether the four subjects already enumerated should be taken up for discussion in which Lord Reading, Mr. Wedgewood Benn and Mr. Lees Smith took part and all of them supported.

The Premier, affirming the Government's desire to hear the delegates' opinions, urged the members not to

allow the fact that the communal question was undecided to prevent them from giving expression to them.

"They can make their position clear that all they do now is with the reserve that, until the other matter is settled, they must participate in the discussions with that reserve. I think that will safeguard them sufficiently and enable the Conference to do its work before it goes. I see no difficulty if we sit from day to day, first as the Federal Structure Sub-Committee and then the Plenary Conference, allowing those who have taken places for next week's sailing to get away."

Who is more Pro-Indian?

An interesting tussle then ensued between Lord Sankey and Mr. Jinnah as to who was more pro-Indian.

Lord Sankey, while appreciating the Moslem attitude, added his voice to those urging the desirability of proceeding with the work and said "Believe me, I am neither pro-Hindu, pro-Moslem nor pro-anything else. I am pro-India."

Mr. Jinnah remarked, "Believe me, I am more pro-Indian than you."

Chairman: "I do not admit that."

Mr. Jinnah remarked, "Believe me, no Mussalman at this table wishes to create unnecessary difficulty".

The Debate

The debate on Army and External Relations was then initiated by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.

Outlining his views on the Army question, Sir T. B. Sapru advocated the appointment of an Indian Army Member responsible to the Governor-General during the transition period. Questions like discipline and mobilisation should, however, be the jurisdiction of the Commander-in-Chief appointed by the Crown, who was bound to be for many years a British officer.

Sir T. B. Sapru expressed the opinion that there was considerable room for the reduction of the Army expenditure, but he was content to leave the matter until it was raised by the Indian Army Member, whose advice it would be impossible to ignore.

Sir T. B. Sapru stressed the need for opening the Army to all Indians and declared that the Indian Army should not be sent out of India without the consent of the Government or the Legislature and dwelt on the need of speeding up Indianisation expressing the opinion that the Chetwode Report in this connection did not meet the requirements.

Pandit Malaviya

Pandit Malaviya declared that Indians must have full control over the Army in order to enable them to discharge their responsibility for the defence of the country. He said that he disagreed with Sir T. B. Sapru that the Army Member should be responsible to the Governor-General, expressing the opinion that he should be responsible to the Legislature.

Pandit Malaviya agreed that the Member should not interfere in the technical side which would be the domain of the Commander-in-Chief and expressed the opinion that, in case of emergency, the Governor-General might suspend the constitution and himself take charge of the Army. Advocating a reduction of the present military strength, Pandit Malaviya suggested that an inquiry to determine the size of the Standing Army was required and urged that expenditure could be reduced by the reduction of British troops.

Instancing the capacity of Indians to defend themselves, Pandit Malaviya referred to the exploits of In-

dian troops in the Great War, which he feared, had been forgotten.

Lord Sankey interjected : "We have not forgotten the valour of the Indian troops."

Pandit Malaviya, concluding his speech on the Defence question, emphasised that the strength of public opinion in India was in favour of transferring control over the Army to the new legislature. He submitted that the power to be given to the Governor-General to take charge of the Army temporarily gave all the assurances required for emergencies.

Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar

Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar, supporting Sir T. B. Saprú's scheme of administering the Army as a reserved Crown subject by the Indian Member, expressed the opinion that it was preferable, during the initial stage of Pandit Malaviya's proposal, to give the Governor-General power to suspend the constitution.

Mr. Mudaliar declared that he was at present unwilling to consider the question of the strength of the Army, pointing out, with reference to the expenditure, that a large amount was devoted to auxiliary and ancillary services and reminding them that the Army Retrenchment Committee had ascertained that a considerable reduction of the expenditure was possible without reducing a single soldier.

Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar thought that the reforms regarding the expenditure and strength of the Army could be worked out with an Indian member in charge. Any way the legislature would be confident that the right examination of these questions was occurring.

Mr. Mudaliar laid stress on the desirability of opening the Army to all classes and suggested the establish-

ment of a Committee of Indian Defence similar to the Committee of Imperial Defence.

Lord Reading

Lord Reading, who made it clear that he was speaking for himself and not associating with his observations other Liberal delegates who were members of the Government, said that he confined himself to the Army and National Defence, but, in much of what he said, he would be covering generally Finance, External Relations and Commercial Discrimination.

He said,

"With regard to Pandit Malaviya's proposals, I could not accept them. I do not understand how it is possible, in view of what we have put forward, that Pandit Malaviya's proposal for an Indian Minister responsible to the legislature throughout could be acceptable. It is the very negation of everything we have indicated from the start."

Lord Reading continued,

"To my mind it is of the essence that if Responsibility at the Centre is to be conferred on the Indian Legislature, which I desire and advocate, there must be a reservation in regard to the Army that it shall remain with the Governor-General, who shall have power to appoint the Minister and have the benefit of that Minister's advice. I never suggested that he must necessarily be an Englishman or Indian. I leave it open to the Governor-General."

"I wish to state very plainly that any proposal for Responsible Government would be unacceptable to me if it did not make the exception that the Army must be in the hands of the Governor-General and that any Minister must be responsible to him.

Lord Reading said that he quite understood that, in regard to some questions concerning Defence, the Le-

gislature and Ministers might desire to make representations to the Governor-General and suggested that this might be arranged by a Standing Committee or Advisory Committee of the Legislature.

Mahatma Gandhi

The Congress view was put by Mahatma Gandhi, who said that he realised that he was undertaking a tremendous responsibility.

"I intervene at this stage, because I am one of those November fogs. I do not know whether there will be a report upon this discussion or not. I do not know whether we are going summarily to close these declarations or extend them.

"The Congress case is that complete responsibility should be transferred to India. That means that there should be complete control of Defence and External Affairs, but it also contemplates adjustments.

"We ought not to deceive ourselves, or the world, into thinking that we would be getting Responsible Government although we may not ask for responsibility in this vital matter. The nation that does not control its Defence Forces and External Policy is hardly a responsible nation. Defence and its Army is to a nation the very essence of existence and if the nation's defence is controlled by an outside agency (no matter how friendly it is) that nation certainly is not responsibly governed.

"Hence, I have very respectfully to claim on behalf of the Congress complete control over the Army, Defence Forces and External Affairs. I put in this also so as to avoid having to speak on it when that subject comes up. To this conclusion we come with the greatest deliberation, that, if we do not get this control at the time of embarking on responsibility, I cannot conceive the time when, because we are enjoying responsibility on other matters, we would be suddenly found fit to control our own defence forces.

"My Dream"

"It should be the proud privilege, the proud duty, of Britain now to initiate us in the mysteries of conducting our own defence. Having clipped our wings it is their duty to give us wings whereby we can fly as they fly. That is really my ambition and, therefore, I say I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of the defence. I refuse to deceive myself that I am going to embark on responsible Government although I cannot control Defence.

"After all, India is not a nation which has never known how to defend herself. All material is there. There are Mussalmans standing in no dread of foreign invasion. Sikhs will refuse to think that they can be conquered by anybody. The Gurkha, immediately he develops a national mind, will say, 'I alone can defend India.'

"Then there are the Rajputs who are supposed to be responsible for a thousand Thermopylaes and not one little Thermopylae in Greece. Are you going to teach things to the people of India, who have never known how to wield arms? It follows that, if I shoulder the burden of responsibility, I mean that all these people are going to join hands.

"I endorse that I do not conceive of a single safeguard that will be only in the interests of India, not a single safeguard that will not be also in the interests of Britain, providing that we contemplate a partnership at will but a partnership on absolutely equal terms.

"The very reasons I have given you to-day for demanding that complete control of the army are also the reasons for pleading and for demanding the control of external affairs.

External Affairs

"Not being well-versed in what is really meant by the external affairs and having to plead my ignorance of what is stated in these reports of the Round Table Conference on the subject

I asked my friends, Mr. Iyengar and Sir T. B. Sapru, what was meant by External Affairs and Foreign Relations. I have got their reply before me. They state that the words mean relations with neighbouring powers, with the Indian States, with other powers in international affairs and with Dominions.

"If these are external affairs I think we are quite capable of shouldering the burden and discharging our obligations. We can undoubtedly negotiate terms of peace with our own kith and kin, our own neighbours, our own country, with the Indian Princes. We can cultivate very friendly relations with our neighbours the Afghans and across the seas with the Japanese and, certainly, we can negotiate with the Dominions also. If the Dominions will not have our countrymen live there in perfect self-respect, we can negotiate with the Dominions.

"Lord Chancellor, I cannot go further. I tender a thousand apologies for taking up the time of this meeting but you will understand the feeling swelling up in me, sitting here day after day, thinking day and night how these deliberations can come to a successful issue.

"You will understand the feeling actuating me, a feeling of absolute goodwill towards Englishmen and a feeling of absolute service to my countrymen."

Sankey's Stirring Reply

The Chairman said:

"Gandhiji, I have listened with the greatest interest to your appeal. I want you to be good enough to help me personally. I am very much impressed, firstly by what you call your dream—I cannot, of course, share it—and then I am very much impressed by your ideals. Those I—perhaps not to the height that you entertain them—share to a very great extent. I am just as anxious to secure the peace and happiness of India as you. I am just as anxious as you and Lord Irwin to carry out those conditions which he and you arrived at at the beginning of

the year and which in paragraph II read as follows: "Of the scheme there outlined Federation is an essential part, so also are Indian Responsibility and Reservations of Safeguards in the interests of India for such matters as, for instance, Defence, External Affairs, the position of Minorities, the financial credit of India and the discharge of obligations."

"I will ask you to assume that I am just as anxious as you to carry out that programme. I do not doubt your good faith. I ask you not to doubt mine. You said you hoped we should be able to teach you a lesson in self-defence. Nobody doubts the bravery of your fellow countrymen. It has been manifested through centuries, on many a stricken field. But, supposing, it is right, as I think it is, that what you say is correct, namely, that at the present moment Indians have to learn this lesson of self-defence. I agree with you.

"With much of what you say, I have the greatest sympathy, but, if you will forgive me saying so, Gandhiji, the difficulty I feel is the responsibility I should incur if I were a dictator and said 'To-morrow I will withdraw every British soldier'. It would be a terrible risk and, if anything happened to the peace and prosperity of India, I, for one, could never forgive myself for taking the decision to do that, when upon admission, the lesson has to be learned how Indians can conduct their own defence. It is because I feel that responsibility that, although I share your ideals, I feel it is asking me, at any rate, to go beyond what I really ought to agree to. I agree with you, Mr. Gandhi, that what we have to consider here are the interests of India, but give me, any way, the same credit that I give you, when I tell you that, honestly, I do not think it would be in the interests of India to comply with the immediate request to withdraw the Army. It is a responsibility that I think no statesman who has real regard for the interests of India—for-

give me putting it that way—could justify himself in assuming. A time may come, I hope it will—”

Mahatmaji interrupting, said :

“May I just correct you? I have not asked for the withdrawal of the British troops. I do not think there is a sentence in my remarks to that effect and if I did utter a sentence of that character I should like to withdraw it.”

The Chairman asked : “Will Pandit Malaviya withdraw it also?”

Pandit Malaviya replied :

that the removal of the internal security British troops should be considered and that the removal of the rest of the troops should be carried out progressively over a series of years.”

The Chairman asked:

“Do I understand you to say that it is impossible at present to have the complete withdrawal of the British Army?”

Pandit Malaviya replied :

“I do not say it is impossible. I think it is perfectly possible but we have not asked for it. If I could persuade my English friends that the whole of the British troops should be withdrawn to-day I would do so, but I have not asked for it because I want to carry my English friends with us as far as we can.”

“Well, my final reply to you is that that if you would take that responsibility you are a braver man than I—and forgive me for saying so,—you are not such a cautious man as I.”

Mr. Sastri

The Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who spoke next, said he wished with great deference to Mr. Gandhi to dissociate himself and some others from the opinions Mr. Gandhi had expressed. It required some hardihood to differ from him on so vital a point, but, in justice to themselves, they thought it necessary to reaffirm

the position which early this year they took on the matter.

"I continue to be of opinion that the Army and External Affairs had best remain Crown subjects during the period of transition. It was with great gratification that I listened to the speech of Lord Reading, in which among other things he re-affirmed the approval of Responsibility at the centre. It appears to me that the amount of responsibility for which we ask, even supposing these two great subjects of Army and External Affairs are excluded, is sufficient to constitute a great improvement in the present situation and I believe that it is an honourable and satisfactory basis for settlement.

"The essential fact, with regard to the Army, which Lord Reading has emphasised is that eventual responsibility should remain with the Viceroy. We agree that is an essential feature, but another essential feature that we have to remember is that, in as brief a period as is compatible with the efficiency of the Army, the transfer should take place from the Governor-General to the Legislature and it was in order to remember during the period of transition that the transfer was to take place that I think that Sir T. B. Sapru insisted on the condition that the Army member should be Indian. I support that recommendation and recommended it to both this committee and the Government. We are anxious that while responsibility should rest in the hands of the Viceroy arrangements should be set afoot and be continually kept in mind which will at the end of that period secure the transfer of the Army into capable and trustworthy Indian hands and I believe that the necessity will be best satisfied under the suggestion put forward by Sir T. B. Sapru."

Dr. Shafaat Ahmed said that the Muslim delegation reserved their opinions pending a settlement of the com-

munal question, as until then, the discussion lacked reality.

Sardar Ujjal Singh associated himself with Sir T. B. Sapru and Mr. Sastri. While agreeing with the principle of opening the Army to all Indians he hoped that no attempt would be made to secure representation of all provinces, expressing the opinion that recruitment should be based solely on the quality of the material. He also urged the acceleration of the pace of Indianisation.

Nawab of Bhopal

The Nawab of Bhopal reminded the Committee that the Princes last year accepted the Defence Sub-Committee's Report. He said that they adhered to both the principle and spirit of Clause IV dealing with increasing the share of Indian people in the defence of India. He also drew attention to the undertaking given to the States in Clause V. Bhopal thought there was common agreement last year that Defence should be a reserved subject and said that so long as the Crown was responsible, it must determine how the responsibility was to be discharged. Bhopal added that the Princes were ready to stay in England if necessary and continue the same spirit of co-operation and enthusiasm till their work was finished.

The debate on the Army was concluded.

Debate on the External Relations

The discussion on External Relations was opened by Sir T. B. Sapru, who said that he adhered to the position he took up last year.

Sir T. B. Sapru strongly supported the reference in the Government of India's dispatch to "increasing the recognition of the individuality of India in a large

range of external relations", suggesting that a good deal of work of the Foreign Department such as, commercial treaties, could be transferred to popular control. He insisted that the protection of Indians overseas should be the responsibility of the Government of India. He, therefore, suggested that, as far as the Foreign Department of the Government of India was concerned, matters within its charge should be carefully examined and classified and while matters relating to peace, war and treaties of a political character should appertain exclusively to the Governor-General during transition, other matters, which really affected national and commercial life, should be within the scope of the legislature.

Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar

Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar, explaining the Congress position, declared that they envisaged India having the same powers and status and the same responsibilities in respect of external affairs, as the Dominions. He said whatever difficulty there might be with regard to the control of the Army, the question of external affairs was much simpler, contending that no limitations should be introduced in the constitution.

Mr. Iyengar said that India, like the Dominions, would be obliged to consider the interests of the Empire as a whole and of other Dominions.

He added,

"There are, of course, many questions of diplomatic foreign relations connected with, what I may call, High Imperial policy or the larger foreign policy of the Empire in which India, I am sure, will follow the line of Britain in most matters."

With regard to the relations with the Princes, Mr. Iyengar expressed the opinion that the best method of

dealing with them was for the Princes unreservedly to enter the Federation.

Mr. Iyengar argued that the control of His Majesty's Government over India in foreign affairs should not be greater than that exercised over the Dominions.

Sir S. Hoare, intervening, said that a practical difficulty was that the question of defence was bound to react in the transitional period with the control of foreign affairs.

It seemed to him very difficult to have Foreign Affairs as a Responsible Portfolio with Defence still a Reserved subject. He suggested that the powers reserved to Whitehall would gradually fall into desuetude.

Mr. Iyengar agreed that Defence and Foreign Policy went together, but argued that since Defence would be under the control of the Legislature, Foreign Affairs should also be under the control of the Legislature.

Other Speakers

Mr. Wedgewood Benn said that, in view of the change of fiscal policy in this country, it was desirable that the Commercial Agreements of India should be made with the Indian Government. Otherwise, such commercial agreements would come under suspicion.

Sir S. Hoare dissented from Mr. Benn's contention and said that England had shown her bona fides in the past by the way she had carried out her fiscal Autonomy Convention and equally she would show her bona fides towards India, whatever might be her fiscal policy here.

Another subject was raised by Mr. Joshi, who urged that the Federal Legislature should be empowered

to deal with Labour questions and also questions arising from the ratifications of International Labour Conventions.

Lord Sankey pointed out that the Federation depended upon consent and the Federal Government and Legislature could have only such powers as the federating units conceded. He suggested that Mr. Joshi should discuss the matter with the States representatives.

Sir A. Hydari, in a contribution which really wound up the debate on External Relations, pointed out that the States stood by the sentence in the Premier's declaration that, with regard to all matters not ceded by the States to the Federation, their relations would be with the Crown acting through the Viceroy and as regards Defence, he said, the Nawab of Bhopal's statement represented the unanimous opinion of the States. They desired to leave all questions such as whether there should be a Minister of Defence and whether he should be an Indian or an European for decision by the Crown.

Sir A. Hydari invited particular attention to the paragraph in the Defence Committee's report in which an undertaking was mentioned that no committee should in any way abrogate treaty obligations with the States. He added that, as far as the Defence Minister being a member of the Cabinet was concerned, he personally did not desire to introduce an extraneous element and thereby destroy the unity of the Cabinet by making him a member. An educative liaison of functions could be performed better by an Advisory Council representing the various interests.

CHAPTER XIII

COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION

THE subject of Commercial Discrimination and safeguards may be said to be the most hotly debated in the Federal Structure Committee. Unlike that of the Army which though occupying a good deal of the committee's time, was purely political in nature, the subject of commerce gave occasion for the European delegates from India and the British delegation minus Labour to take an extremely active part in the debate as it particularly concerned the Europeans as a class in India.

Opening the debate on the Commercial Discrimination, Mr. Benthall said that the leaders of British commercial opinion had no desire whatever to stand in the way of India's constitutional advance on sound lines, but, unless the rights of the British commercial community were constitutionally protected, most clearly and unequivocally, they must reserve their consent to the transfer of political power.

What they claimed was what was laid down in the Government of India's Dispatch last year, namely, that subject to India's right to receive reciprocal treatment, citizens of any part of the Empire should be allowed to enter India freely and engage in any trade and should receive just treatment. What they claimed for the British community in India was exactly what was enjoyed by Indians in Great Britain. As British subjects they were entitled to any act which allowed State aid to the industry.

External Capital's Claims

India had reached the present stage largely owing to the British capital. Their first claim was for recog-

nition of their established rights which was part of the national economy. It was not only a question of justice but also of expediency. because external capital would not be attracted to India unless there was confidence of its security.

The objection that external capital was opposed to political progress no longer applied. Regarding the criticism that the European capitalists did not train Indians, he referred to the steps which were already being taken and held that it would be a blunder to force the pace.

The co-operation of Indians and Europeans was in the best interests of both and the British community was willing to accept the majority report of the External Capital Committee but they would not agree to Government having power to prescribe that some proportion of the directors should be Indians but they agreed that Government should approve of the composition of the Board.

Mr. Benthall asked for a recognition of the fact that the contemplated constitution would give India vast control. He said the Government should be master in its own house and what Europeans were asking for would not prevent its subsidising and nationalising the key industries. If the acquisition of the rights of existing companies was necessary, compensation should be paid.

Subsidies should not be racially discriminatory. For example if both Indian and English firms produced a particular kind of steel, subsidy should be given to both

Mr. Jayakar

Mr. Jayakar, who said that there was much in Mr. Benthall's speech with which he agreed, suggested that Mr. Benthall should consider whether the formula on Commercial Discrimination reached at the last session should not be adopted for the present and wait until India was free for a proper Convention to be concluded. Mr. Jayakar was of opinion that the formula constituted a very wise compromise, which had the approval last year of almost everybody. He assured Mr. Benthall that India did not desire, generally speaking, to make racial discrimination. She had suffered from it in the past, and, when she was free, she would be careful to avoid it.

Mr. Jayakar referred, in this connection, to the recommendations of the Nehru Report, (quoted below) which represented the bulk of educated opinion in India. He was of opinion that the clause dealing with the Fundamental Rights, combined with the report's definition of a citizen, in which he was prepared to include companies and corporations, indicated the lines on which the solution was to be found.

Emphasising the need for possessing the power to regulate competition, Mr. Jayakar declared that it was not a question of Europeans and Indians but of protecting infant industries, which were endangered by the superior competition of other countries.

Dealing with the right of the future Government to lay down conditions as regards companies, capital, composition of directorates and admission of Indians for training, Mr. Jayakar declared that if the companies

wanted subsidy, the future Government must have the power to regulate these matters and on a question raised by Mr. Joshi, regarding limiting the proportion of foreigners employed, Mr. Jayakar said that the point came under the doctrine of reciprocity, which he advocated. He was prepared to give foreign nationals the same rights as their companies gave to Indians. He thought last year's formula ought to cover all these cases.

Sir P. Thakurdass

Sir P. Thakurdas in the course of the debate said, that what Mr. Benthall had said indicated, "You shall not touch anything in which any Britisher is interested and we want a provision for it from now." That was a tall and unjustifiable order. He did not underestimate the just apprehensions of the Britishers, but asked Mr. Benthall whether the restrictions indicated did not amount practically to shackles on the development of India, commercially and industrially, that had no parallel in any other British Dominion? If Mr. Benthall would only consider the position from that viewpoint Sir P. Thakurdas and his colleagues would enter into the spirit of the Britisher who sought protection from any aggression in future. British capital invested in India had brought handicaps. Indian railways were managed from London and instead of the industries for their maintenance being developed in India, materials were sent out from Britain. India wanted capital without political shackles, not capital which called for the safeguards they were discussing. Although Indians might have been taught racial discrimination by the Government of India the delegates were unanimous that they did not want to discriminate racially.

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi said it was impossible to commit the Congress, much less the future Government of India, to a sweeping resolution of the character of the formula adopted in last session, providing for no discrimination between rights of the British mercantile community and Indian-born subjects. He expected that the future Government would be constantly obliged to discriminate in favour of famishing Indians against those who blended riches with other privileges, but, having said that, he associated himself completely with British merchants and European houses in their legitimate demands that there should be no racial discrimination.

He proposed the formula for which he had fought in South Africa.

"No disqualification not suffered by the Indian-born citizen of the State should be imposed on any persons lawfully residing or entering India merely on the ground of race, colour or religion."

Gandhiji also proposed a further formula that

"No existing interest legitimately acquired and not conflicting with the best interests of the nation in general shall be interfered with except in accordance with the law applicable to such interests."

Lord Reading

Lord Reading commented on the great measure of agreement which the discussion had revealed.

He thought that there was no difference of opinion on principle and said everybody, in principle recognised that, in trade, commerce and industry no distinction should be made. The question was how British rights were to be secured.

Lord Reading would prefer a convention by agreement, but said he would strongly object to a convention which had to be passed by the new legislature. It was essential that the convention should form part of the constitution.

Lord Reading pointed out that the Nehru Report regarded discriminatory legislation as inconceivable. Taking that as the starting point Lord Reading referred to the definition of "Citizen" and the declaration of "Fundamental Rights" and took exception to the definition as involving not only citizenship but something more, namely, that, in order to become a citizen of India, a person must cease to be a citizen of this country. This was fatal from the British viewpoint. They could not ask an Englishman to give up citizenship in his own country in order to get rights to carry on business in India and to get the same rights as Indian-born subjects.

Lord Reading made it clear that he would oppose root and branch any idea of discriminatory administration or legislation penalising by some means a powerful British concern in order to enable an Indian concern to flourish. If unfair competition had to be provided against, the general law of the land must apply. If the competition was unfair it was unfair not only in one particular trade but in every other trade and if they wanted to legislate against it they must legislate against it for all trades. If it happened in one particular trade only, they were obviously entitled to legislate against it, but if it was merely unfair because a concern happened to have achieved great and powerful influence by its capital, reputation or by the associations it had made they could not and ought not to attempt to

legislate against it. However difficult it might be for an Indian nascent company to progress where there was a powerful company in the same line next door they could not legislate or take administrative acts against the latter. Competition must determine the matter.

Sir T. B. Saprú

Sir T. B. Saprú dealt with the points raised by Lord Reading, particularly with reference to the part of the Nehru Report dealing with discrimination.

Paying a tribute to Pandit Motilal Nehru on his work in connection with the report Sir T. B. Saprú said that, if there was one man of his generation who was a full-blooded Nationalist, it was Mr. Motilal with whom Nationalism was a burning passion. Continuing, Sir T. B. Saprú said that it was in pursuance of a desire expressed by European trade and commerce that the definition of a "citizen" referred to by Lord Reading was incorporated in the resolution passed at the All-Parties Conference held in Lucknow in December, 1928. Sir T. B. Saprú said that, as far as the clause relating to citizenship was concerned, there was still room for improvement to cover all ideas exchanged at the Round Table Conference and it seemed to him that there was no room for apprehension. It was never intended by the authors of the Nehru Report that Englishmen should lose their original citizenship in India. All rights belonging to them as citizens of England would continue.

Concluding, Sir T. B. Saprú appealed to the Conference to settle as many points of difference as possible and said that the time had really come for a settlement with Europeans.

Sir P. Sethna

Sir Phiroze Sethna endorsed Mr. Benthall's statement that great advantages had been conferred on India by the investment of British capital, but simultaneously England and Englishmen had derived untold good from it. The advantages, therefore, had been mutual. The fears entertained by the British were unjustified.

Mr. Benthall and Lord Reading had referred to reciprocity between India and the British, but it was only theoretical. Sir P. Sethna subscribed to the recommendations of the External Capital Committee, but the proposal of Indian friends for a fixed percentage of Indian capital was impossible and unworkable, but he would certainly recommend that the rupee companies should offer at least 50 per cent of the capital to Indians in the first instance.

Gandhiji's Views

Mahatma Gandhiji congratulated Mr. Benthall on his admirable and temperate statement, but regretted that he had introduced a claim that Britishers had conferred certain benefits on India and also a condition that European support of the National Demand depended on Indians accepting the European demands.

Dealing briefly with its implications Gandhiji regretted that they were different from the deduction which Lord Reading sought to draw from the last session's formula. There would be no discrimination against a single European, for he proposed no distinction between Britishers and other Europeans, Americans or Japanese. He did not intend to copy the British colonies and Dominions which disfigured their statute books with legislation based on distinctions of

colour and race. He did not wish India to live in complete isolation and allow nobody to enter or trade with in her borders but there were many things he must do in order to equalise the conditions.

If any of those enjoying privileges, whether Europeans or Indians, found that they were being discriminated against, he would sympathise but be unable to help for he would need their assistance to raise people from the mire. Gandhiji referred to the condition of "Untouchables" who were at present living at the mercy of the so-called higher classes and the state and said that in order to equalise conditions, the first act of the Legislature should be to give these people grants of land freely the cost of which should come from the monied classes, including Europeans. It would be a battle between the haves and the have-nots and he was afraid that the National Government would not come into existence if the haves maintained that the dumb millions should not have their own Government unless their possessions and rights were guaranteed. The Congress would not admit discrimination against non-nationals, as such. Any discrimination would be also ground for discrimination against Indian-born citizens.

Gandhiji proposed, in this connection, his second formula and explaining it, said that he bore in mind the Congress resolution in connection with taking over the present Government's obligations. There was no question of repudiation but of merely taking over under examination.

Sapru and Gandhiji

At the close of Mahatmaji's speech, Sir T. B. Sapru evidently objecting to his queer method of defining property, had a go at him when he asked whether Gandhiji

proposed that the future Government should investigate everyone's title to property and if so, whether any definite period would be specified.

Gandhiji, replied that everything would be above board. It would be done by legal machinery. "I think there will be no limitation running against a wrong."

Sir T. B. Saprú asked "Under your National Government, therefore, no title in India will be safe?"

Gandhiji replied, "Under our National Government, the Congress will decide these things and if there is any undue fear, I think it would be possible to satisfy every legitimate doubt. I am not going to say that I shall examine no right and no titles."

Though Gandhiji's discrimination formula was open to discussion, Indian leaders were disquieted owing to the likely effect of his speech defining the Congress position in intensifying the Conservatives' pressure on the Premier against immediate Central Responsibility. Conservatives' designs in this behalf were understood to be strongly entrenched by departmental experts pointing out the impossibility of bringing the Federation into operation under three years and producing a time-table.

Lord Sankey referred to two official committees sitting and drafting reports, one dealing with Provincial Autonomy and the other with Federation. It was reported the former was ready for presentation to Parliament based on communal *status quo*. The latter owing to many "loose ends" was unready and could not be presented to Parliament till the Princes decide to join the Federation and a communal settlement was arrived at

Fears Re-Provincial Autonomy

This announcement confirmed the rumours current since some time and the fears entertained by the delegates as to the object of the Government, which, whatever might have been at the opening of the Conference was now clearly thought to be to deliberately push forward the Provincial Autonomy scheme and shelve the main question of federation and central responsibility into the back ground on the excuse afforded by the deadlock prevailing in the settlement of the communal issue and also the states' unreadiness to join the federation forthwith. There was considerable consternation among the delegates on this new move of the Government and it was frankly believed that the change of Government and the overwhelming Tory pressure on the Premier was the cause of this sudden change of policy. This was evident even at the beginning of the debate on Commercial safeguards when Sir S. Hoare wanted to wind up the proceedings as soon as the speeches were over, without allowing time as was done with regard to the other debates to discuss the draft reports on these subjects in the Committee before they were presented at the Plenary Session and in Parliament. The reason assigned by Sir S. Hoare for his haste was, that they had had enough of Conference and that it was high time that the proceedings were wound up to enable delegates to return in time after attending the Plenary Session. But it was freely believed that the motive behind this move was that the Conservative Secretary of State for India, the European group and the British delegation felt rather keenly on the subject of safeguards and did not want that the almost unanimous decision arrived at on the subject by the

leading Indian delegates should be brought for final discussion in the Committee and to avoid the practical steps which Government may be compelled to take in the matter. But, owing to the spirited protests raised by Mr. Benn and Mr. Lees Smith and the firm determination of the leading delegates to carry on the Conference inspite of the Government's move and the ominous silence exhibited by the Moslem delegation, coupled with the personal influence of Lord Sankey made the Government alter their decision and allow the Committee to proceed in the usual course. But still it was clearly evident that the subject of federation and central responsibility will be shelved on the basis of the innumerable technical difficulties in its way raised by experts and the absence of a communal solution. The delegates however determined to push on inspite of all these discouragements. The subject of Provincial Autonomy however retained the prominence with which it was invested by the Government.

Debate Continued

The debate on Commercial discrimination and safeguards was carried on, Mr. A. R. Aiyengar continuing the thread of debate observed that he was unable to agree that there should be no distinction between a mere sojourner and citizens Indian-born or domiciled after a definite period of residence or that absentee firms should have, besides the full rights of the British citizenship the additional rights of Indian citizenship.

Mr. Iyengar claimed that the future Government should be placed on exactly the same footing as other Dominions. He, therefore, urged that the future Indian Legislature and Government should be trusted and an

effort should be made to reach an honourable understanding on the immediate difficulties, the future being based on the goodwill thus created.

Right to Retaliate

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, referred to the claim that India should have the right to resort to retaliatory measures against injustice and inequity in immigration restrictions on British Indians within the Empire and said that he wanted that principle to extend equally to commercial and industrial matters. The safeguards proposed for British interests constituted a restriction of the sovereignty that no self-governing legislature could accept and which the British Government always discouraged Colonial Governors from enforcing through the reserve powers.

Mr. Sastri

The Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri recalling that when the matter was discussed at the last session it was recognised that India should have the same freedom in this matter as the British Parliament and that, by a convention based on reciprocity India should be asked to exercise the same forbearance towards the people of Britain and Ireland as they exercised towards the people of India, deprecated taking the matter further, as Europeans now seemed to be doing. He urged that India should be given legal power to impose discriminations and then, by a reciprocity convention, she should agree to forbear as the British had honourably forborne. "You will find that she will respond handsomely".

The nature of the British Empire was such that freedom was given to a Dominion to discriminate against its own nationals. Mr. Sastri pointed out that the

descendants of Indians settled in South Africa were subjected to the most humiliating discrimination. He said this happened in every Dominion. Indians gratefully recognised that Britain did not discriminate against Indians. Parliament, however, had power but the British people practised forbearance.

Lord Sankey, interrupting, said he hoped they had good sense as well as good-will.

Hurting National Self-Respect

Having urged the British to rely on Indian good-will, Mr. Sastri argued that, to impose a disability upon the projected Indian Dominion was to hurt unnecessarily the self-respect and national dignity of the Indian people, and serve no useful purpose.

Pandit Malaviya

Pandit Malaviya urged that foreigners and British subjects trading in India were entitled to ask for protection of the commercial right. They were not entitled to ask the same measure of protection and assistance to which Indian indigenous industries were entitled and he was of opinion that the last session's formula went far beyond the region of protection of commercial interests.

Supporting Mr. Gandhi's formula in which connection he declared that there was no justification for the suggestion that, if it was adopted, the title to every property would be unsafe, Pandit Malaviya suggested, in order to make it more definite, the adoption of a formula to the effect that no discriminative legislation should be passed or administrative action taken against any one lawfully residing or entering India merely on the ground of race, colour or religion.

Debate on Finance

Before the commencement of the debate on Finance Lord Sankey again reminded the Committee of the present difficulties in the financial world and opined that the present was not the time to relax safeguards or caution in dealing with them either in India or in England.

Lord Sankey begged the committee to remember that the Reservations and Safeguards must be in the interests of India and said a careless word or hastily expressed opinion might have repercussions outside the Conference and cause great damage not only in India but in England and elsewhere. Although he did not desire to curtail discussion Lord Sankey urged them, in the interests of India, to speak with the greatest caution.

Sir P. Thakurdas

Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas recognised that there was no necessity to deal with any special grievance of Exchange or Currency but India exercised very little influence as far as the international world was concerned. They were there to influence the Chairman and the British delegates and to submit to them the minimum aspirations of India and explain what form of Government and what particular safeguards in the interest of India would be acceptable. If anything more was imposed they would not recognise it as an advance.

The Government of India had argued that a sudden change alone was to be avoided. He asked where the suddenness was considering that they had been asking for the control of finance for at least ten years.

The manner in which the Government of India had managed the Currency and Exchange matters had tried

the patience of Indians. The future political reforms would be useless unless Finance was completely transferred.

No Minister responsible to the legislature would have permitted the scandalous military expenditure.

India's total indebtedness was half in England and half in India. Would India, therefore, be so rash as to ask for any system of reform which would endanger the safety of those in India who held Government paper? The interests of the British investor were tied up, with the interests of the Indian investor.

Sir P. Thakurdas pointed out that India's debt was comparatively small and mostly productive. There was, therefore, no reason for special caution regarding India's solvency. It was generally agreed that political influence should be eliminated from matters of Exchange and Currency.

Sir T. B. Sapru

Sir T. B. Sapru devoted his speech to the constitutional and legal position and said that Section 20 of the Government of India Act gave ample safeguards against the suggestion that a new and inexperienced legislature might play with public money and use it to other than legitimate purposes. Unless Gandhiji's suggestions were accepted that debts should be investigated and certain debts wiped out, the present statute provided the amplest safeguards for certain kind of securities including the debts of East India Company and the debts and liabilities lawfully contracted on behalf of the Government. Under the existing Act Parliament's control was complete and absolute and when they were told that Finance might, for a certain period, be under the control of the Secretary of State the implication was

that the ultimate control should vest in Parliament and, so long as that was so, responsible Government would be a maimed and paralysed sort of Government.

Draft Report on Defence

The draft report of the Federal Structure Committee on Defence and External Relations was submitted by Lord Sankey for final consideration of the Committee. It stated that the majority of the Committee consider it impossible to vest in Indian legislature, during the transition, constitutional responsibility for controlling Defence as long as the burden of actual responsibility cannot be simultaneously transferred and as regards External Relations the majority reaffirm the view expressed by the Committee's second report that the Governor-General should be responsible for them.

The Committee point out that the consideration of Defence is based on the principle enunciated by the last session's Defence Sub-Committee that Defence must be increasingly the concern of Indian people. The report says that some members strongly urged that no true responsibility should be conferred on India unless Defence, involving control of the Army in India, including British troops, is immediately placed in the hands of an Indian ministry responsible to the legislature with any safeguards that can be shown to be necessary. The majority, however, do not share this view. They therefore, reaffirm the conclusion reached by the Federal Structure Sub-Committee at the last session that the "assumption by India of all powers and responsibilities hitherto resting on Parliament cannot be made at one step and that, during the transition, the Governor-General shall be responsible for Defence" assisted by a Minister responsible to him and not to the

legislature. There is no disagreement, however, that the legislature must be deeply concerned in many aspects of Defence. It is undeniable that such opportunities as the legislature at present possesses of discussing and thereby influencing Defence administration cannot be diminished.

The size, composition and cost of the Army are to be essentially matters for those on whom responsibility rests and their expert advisers. Yet they are not questions on which there can be no voicing of public opinion through constitutional channels.

The Legislature would thus continue to be brought into the counsels of the administration in discussing such outstanding problems as the carrying out of Indianisation. Further, there must be the correlation of military and civil administration where the two spheres overlap.

The suggestion was made in this connection that a body analogous to the Committee of Imperial Defence should be established in India.

Three Proposals

The report says that various suggestions were made to secure this participation in the counsels of the administration, the cardinal feature of which generally was the precise position of the Minister appointed by the Governor-General to take charge of Defence. The report mentions three proposals:

(1) The Minister while primarily responsible to the Governor-General should be responsible to the Legislature only as regards certain aspects of Defence.

(2) The Minister, though responsible to the Governor-General, should be Indian and might be chosen from the Legislature and

(3) The Minister, as contemplated in the second proposal, should be considered as a member responsible to the Ministry participating in the discussions, enjoying joint responsibility and resigning in the event of defeat in the Legislature over a question not relating to the Army.

The report says that, while some of these suggestions contain the germs of possible lines of development, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that, as long as the Governor-General is responsible for Defence, the constitution must provide that the Minister should be appointed by the unfettered discretion of the Governor-General and be responsible to him alone.

Further, the Ministers' relations with the rest of the Ministry and the legislature must be left to the evolution of political usage within the framework of the constitution.

Regarding supply, the report mentions the view expressed that this should not be subject to the annual vote but an agreement should be sought on the basic figure for a stated period, subject to joint review by the Legislature and the Crown representatives at the end of the period with special powers in the Governor-General to incur emergency expenditure.

The report says that the details of any such plan should be further carefully examined.

Draft Report on External Relations

Dealing with External Relations the report says that similar considerations apply as in the case of Defence and generally the views expressed followed closely members' opinions regarding Defence. The report adds that there is a difficulty in connection with External Relations, namely, defining the content of the sub-

ject. The reserved subject of External Relations would be confined primarily to the subject of political relations with countries external to India and the relations with Frontier tracts. Commercial economic and other relations would fall primarily within the purview of the Legislature and Ministers, but, to a degree, questions of the latter category might react on the political question. Special responsibility will devolve on the Governor-General to secure that they do not conflict with his responsibility for the control of External Relations.

Close co-operation by whatever means experience may prove most suitable will be needed accordingly between the Minister holding the External Relations portfolio and his colleagues, "Responsible" Ministers.

The report mentions that misunderstanding has arisen by the Committee's second report including in External Relations "relations with States outside the Federal sphere" and says that, as stated in the Premier's declaration at the close of last session, the "connection of States with the Federation will remain subject to the basic principle that, with regard to all matters not ceded by them to the Federation, their relations will be with the Crown acting through the Viceroy".

The report points out that the Committee when discussing the two subjects with which it deals and also financial safeguards and commercial discrimination (draft reports on which will be circulated later) did not have the advantage of hearing the views of British Indian and Muslim delegates, who reserved their opinion until a satisfactory solution was found of the problems, which confronted the Minorities Sub-Committee.

and adds that some other representatives of Minorities have similarly reserved their opinion.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PLENARY SESSION

THE Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference opened on the 27th of November. It met again around last year's famous oval table and in consequence of the increases in the number of delegates, two tables were placed within the enclosed space.

Lord Sankey

Lord Sankey, Mr. Thomas and Sir W. Jowitt sat to the Premier's immediate left and then came Mrs. Naidu, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Malaviya, while the remainder of the British Delegation were seated on the Premier's right almost opposite. The representatives of the Minorities, the Aga Khan and other Muslims forming a large block sat at the tables within the oval.

In order that every aspect of the work of the Round Table Conference might be open to discussion during the final Plenary Session, Lord Sankey and the Prime Minister began proceedings by formally proposing the adoption of the reports of the Committee of the Federal Structure and Minorities. Fifty delegates had notified that they wished to speak and at the end of the session, the Premier was to make a statement of the Government's Policy.

Lord Sankey emphasised the solid nature of the work of the Federal Structure Committee for the new Indian Constitution and expressed the belief that Mr. MacDonald would be remembered as the architect of the Federal Constitution of India. The Committee had endorsed the report, but he called attention to the fact

that Muslim members and some other minority representatives had reserved their opinion on the subjects of Defence, External Relations, Financial safeguards and Commercial discrimination until a satisfactory solution was found to the minority problems.

The general debate was then begun by the Raja of Korea.

The Raja of Korea

The Raja of Korea generally supported the views of the States' Delegation as enunciated from time to time by the Nawab of Bhopal on Federal problems and appealed for the sympathetic consideration of the claims of the smaller States. He opined that the constitution of the Princes' Chamber was an unsatisfactory basis for the appointment of States' seats in the Federal Legislature and urged the constitution of a Parliamentary Committee to give a binding decision on this subject, if the Chamber did not reach an agreement satisfactory to all.

Sir A. P. Patro

Sir A. P. Patro thought that the general result of the Conference was far from satisfactory, although much good work had been done. Federation was fraught with difficulties, but he did not despair. The practical question was how long the struggle would take to complete. If it was likely to be delayed it was indispensable promptly to introduce responsibility in the Centre in British India.

Sir Abdul Qaiyum

Sir Abdul Qaiyum advanced the Frontier's case for equal status with other provinces. He said that the people of that province would not tolerate anything less.

The report of the last Sessions' Sub-Committee did not suffice. The position was so serious that prompt action alone would avert a revolution.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir

Sir Cowasji Jehangir pointed out that Moderates demanded complete transference of power to the provinces unhampered by the reservations to the Governor except in order to avert a breakdown of the administration. Speaking as one determined to fight for British connection, Sir C. Jehangir uttered a note of warning against the grant of merely provincial autonomy and said : "If you make a mistake at the present critical juncture, you will wipe out men like myself from public life. We are not going to join the non-co-operation movement but there will not be a school of thought to which we can belong. Don't let the masses believe that non-co-operation is the only method of gaining liberty. Otherwise you will not have a friend left in India and you will wipe out those friends who throughout their life have stood by the British connection."

Dr. Narendranath Law

Dr. Narendranath Law regretted communal failure but adhered to his opposition to communal electorates and while accepting a declaration of fundamental rights, declared that he was unable to support the Minorities agreement pointing out *inter alia* that it did not provide for the representation of such economic interests as commerce, landholders and labour. The speaker criticised the financial proposals in relation to Bengal and said that unless the province had adequate resources, Dominion status would be poor comfort.

H. H. The Nawab of Bhopal

The Nawab of Bhopal declared that all representatives of the States at that Conference were prepared to co-operate wholeheartedly for completing the work of building up the Federation which would bring satisfaction to the whole country. Nothing could dim the steady flame of India's desire to be equal partner in the British Commonwealth. Nobody denied that the realisation of this desire must be subject to such reservations as were necessary in the interests of the Indian Empire. The Nawab of Bhopal concluded by paying a tribute to Lord Sankey. He said that all desired to see him in India at the earliest possible moment to continue the work of the Conference.

H. H. The Maharajah of Darbhanga

The Maharaja of Darbhanga, combating the suggestion that the protection of important interests conflicted with Nationalist ideals, advanced landlords' claim for adequate safeguarding of their rights. They needed proper representation in all legislatures through special electorates. The Maharaja of Darbhanga advocated second chambers in the provinces and urged that lands under permanent settlement should be regarded as a solemn and inviolable pledge. He urged that the tendency of the Indian legislatures recently to interfere in religious and social customs should be checked.

Mr. Fazlul Huq

Mr. Fazlul Huq contended that under responsible Government, Hindus being in a majority in most of the provinces, would have seventeen shillings in the pound. Moslems desired that they and other communities should have a proper share of the remaining three shillings.

He said that he personally, though not speaking on behalf of the Moslem Delegation, was prepared to accept joint electorates in Bengal provided Mussalmans received their full quota on a population basis. He declared that in view of the backwardness of the Moslems they would be unable in open election on equal electoral roll to secure the position to which their numbers entitled them. Mr. Fazlul Huq added that the Round Table Conference had dispelled the calumny that British Parliament wished to place obstacles in the way of Indian constitutional advance. There was not a single delegate who was not impressed with the fervour and singleminded devotion of the attempt to help Indians solve their own difficulties.

Sir P. Ginwala

Sir P. Ginwalla advocated a further conference when a constitution was put into final shape. He concluded that the Round Table Conference was at least unanimous in condemning Untouchability and suggested that it should record its opinion that swift action was necessary to wipe out this blot on Indian civilisation.

Mr. V. V. Giri

Mr. Giri expressed the opinion that the Conference was largely a failure because comparatively minor issues received prominence, while vital matters relating to full responsible Government were dealt with after hurried discussion.

Mr. Hafiz Hussain

Mr. Hafiz Hussain, after reaffirming the Moslem standpoint, drew attention to the difficulties in the establishment of Federation and said that there was not

reason for British India marking a time. Pending the entry of the Princes, he suggested that provinces themselves should federate and create a Central Federal Government for British India.

Mr. J. N. Basu

Mr. Basu emphasised the objection of non-Muslim communities in Bengal to placing power permanently in the hands of the majority community through separate electorates and stressing the universality of the desire in India for self-rule, said, that the communal difference, though it must be dealt with did not constitute the predominant factor of Indian life. The case for trusting the people was therefore the strongest possible.

H. H. The Maharaja of Indore

The Maharaja of Indore, in his speech, replied to the objection against his scheme and proceeded to urge that it was inadvisable to thrust an undiluted democracy on the States, for democracy, despite its advantages was not an unmixed blessing. India therefore should benefit by the experience of other countries and model her future institutions with regard to the traditions, sentiments and temperament of the people.

The Nawab of Chattari

The Nawab of Chattari, regretting the failure to solve the communal question, thanked the Premier for help and said that except on the question of electorates there was complete unanimity among Muslims. He considered that when all other safeguards for Muslims were embodied in the constitution and Muslims realised that the safety of the minorities rested on the goodwill

of the majority, they would willingly give up separate electorates.

Reviewing rural agitation in India the Nawab of Chattari said that its cause was mainly economic. He strongly urged that property rights should be included among the fundamental rights.

Raja Narendranath

Raja Narendranath wholeheartedly supported the protest against divorcing Provincial Autonomy from Central Responsibility, for the questions to be solved in connection with the former were more difficult than those connected with Central Responsibility.

Raja Narendranath strongly opposed the method of recruitment to the public services suggested in the Minorities Pact and said that it would be preferable to meet the claims of all classes by reserving for transitional period a proportion of the appointments for which such claims might be considered and for the rest declare merit to be the sole criterion.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav

Mr. Jadhav generally agreed with Sir A. P. Patro and also with Sir Cowasji Jehangir regarding commercial discrimination. He expressed the opinion that at least partial Central Responsibility was necessary and said that if the Princes could not enter Federation soon, power should be given to British India alone to work a federal constitution. Mr. Jadhav urged the necessity to provide for the just representation of the rural population and declared that separate electorates were indispensable for the Depressed Classes.

Sir Hubert Carr

Sir Hubert Carr affirmed that the Europeans urged the maintenance of the efficiency of the services because they wanted Government to start with such weapons as would enable them to ensure peace and prosperity. They would have preferred Provincial Autonomy before central changes, but realised the deplorable fact that there was not sufficient confidence between India and Britain to-day for India to be content merely with Provincial Autonomy and the declared intention for central development. They therefore endorsed the demand of fellow delegates that the whole framework of the Federation and Provincial Autonomy would be introduced province by province, the varying needs of each being recognised in its constitution. The Europeans' demand to be allowed to take an equal share with Indian fellow subjects in the commercial and industrial development of India was vital to them, but did not imply any disadvantage to India or handicap on her industrial development. The generous spirit in which their demands has been received in almost every quarter constituted a good augury for the future. Sir H. Carr hoped that as a result of a contract between Indian politicians and His Majesty's Government, all parties would feel bound to throw their whole influence in the task of allaying of unrest in India and preparing for the calm conditions in which India would rise from the present economic distress.

Mr. Jarmanidas

Mr. Jarmanidas said that the Federation had been accepted by all and differences of opinion between the Princes concerned only the method of selecting repre-

sentatives. Mr. Jarmanidas thought that a *via media* between the conflicting views on this subject should be possible. He was of opinion that population and salutes would not provide satisfactory basis for the distribution of seats. He referred in this connection to Sir Akbar Hydar's scheme and said that the Federation was doomed if that scheme was adopted. Salutes did not constitute the real criterion of the State's importance and the majority of Sovereign States would remain outside the Federation if they were not accorded proper representation.

Mr. C. Barooah

Mr. Barooah also insisted that the Conference far from being a failure as some people wanted the world to believe had been a great success and proved that India was united and earnest in the demand for complete self-government. If the communities differed they did so only on details and not on the fundamental principles. Points on which they agreed outnumbered the disagreements and the latter had been narrowed down to such an extent that they might now be left to the sagacity and fairness of British statesman for a satisfactory settlement. He appealed to the Premier to take communal differences into his own hands and by persuading some and overruling others settle the matter in a manner conducive to the best interests of all.

The Raja of Bobbili

The Raja of Bobbili, on behalf of the landlords, affirmed that they did not desire to thwart India's unanimous desire for Dominion Status, but they required guarantees in the form of special representation in all legislatures, establishment of Provincial Bicameral Le-

gislatures and the inclusion in the Fundamental Rights of a clause securing the inviolability of their agreements and sanads received from the Paramount Power.

Bobbili proceeded to urge Andhras' claim for a separate province and said on behalf of Madras landholders that Justicites emphatically supported the Depressed Classes' claim for special representation and also a similar claim for Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians.

Mr. A. R. Aiyengar

Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar declared that the Government's intention to hand over responsibility to the Indian Legislatures was implicit in the declaration of last January. He said it was inconceivable that Provincial Autonomy alone satisfied that condition.

Mr. Iyengar urged that the Government should have been more definite regarding the safeguards that they considered necessary. He was of opinion that an agreement was still possible if the Government took leaders such as Mahatmaji into confidence and discussed with them, if necessary, *in camera*. He affirmed that if that was done there would be practically no difficulty in proceeding with the introduction of a Bill in Parliament.

Sir M. Mehta

Sir Manubhai Mehta stated that he had received a message from the Maharaja of Bikaner asking him to place a request before the Plenary Session for the enlargement of the Federal Chamber.

Sir Manubhai Mehta thought that the States' views regarding the future programme were insufficiently placed before the Conference. He declared that Central Responsibility, Federal

Government and Safeguards went together and Provincial Autonomy, with centralised control, was meaningless. There cannot be a Federation unless there is central responsibility. We are prepared to federate only if there is a Responsible Centre and unless our financial rights are fully safeguarded we would not agree to any transfer of powers to the Provinces which cannot become autonomous without our agreeing to such a transfer. The statesmen of the Empire must find a solution of this dilemma.

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhiji began his speech five minutes past midnight and delivered for 70 minutes one of his greatest speeches—noble, cogent and pacificatory. Emphasising the representative, authoritative, powerful and determined position of the Congress he pleaded for a peaceful settlement with it. He appealed to the Government not to distrust the great and powerful political organisation after it had been invited.

Gandhiji suggested it was too late to try to resist Civil Disobedience. He stood at the parting of the ways. "I will count no sacrifice too great if I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty.

"But so long as they did not agree regarding liberty's implications so long was a compromise impossible. A nation of 350 millions did not need the assassin's dagger, the poison bowl, the sword, the spear, or the bullet. It needed only a will of its own and ability to say 'no'. The Indian nation is learning to do that.

Gandhiji proceeded, "whilst, I shall not abate by a tittle the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, while I do not withdraw a word from the speeches I have made at

the Federal Structure Sub-Committee, I am here to compromise, and to consider every formula that the British or Indian ingenuity can prepare. But, for Heaven's sake, give me a frail man, 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organisation that he represents. You distrust that organisation though you may seemingly trust me. I am infinitely smaller than the organisation. I have no authority except what I derive from the Congress."

Gandhiji did not expect that anything he said would influence the decision of the Cabinet, which it had probably already taken. The liberty of practically a whole continent could hardly be settled by negotiation.

He said he dissented from most of the reports submitted to the Conference, but felt that he could not truly represent the Congress unless he did so. Having claimed universality for the Congress, Gandhiji said that it was a calamity from the viewpoint of the work before the Conference that the Congress was considered as merely one political party. He wished he could convince the public and Government that the Congress was capable of delivering the goods. It would have made a great difference if the claim had been recognised. If they recognised that fact they would welcome an organisation which could run a parallel Government without any force at its command even under adverse circumstances. Although the Congress had been rejected and although it was impossible for him to prove that claim here, he asserted it because a tremendous responsibility rested on him.

Referring to Mr. Ghuznavi's statement that school boys in Calcutta were taught anti-British hatred, Gandhiji said that charges of that nature had been brought against the Congress times without number and repeatedly refuted but, if it was true, he was there to tender an apology on behalf of the Calcutta Corporation.

Mr. M. R. Jayakar

Mr. Jayakar emphasised the expectancy with which 350 millions were awaiting the next day's fateful declaration. He commented on the degree of unanimity accorded to the three-fold scheme of Federation, Central Responsibility and Safeguards, the soundness of which had been confirmed as the Conference went into details. He said that his only fear was that, in order to satisfy Parliamentary exigencies, the scheme might be mutilated and India might be offered less than a complete plan for the scheme stood or fell as a whole.

Lord Reading

Lord Reading, who re-affirmed amidst applause that he stood exactly where he stood last January, aroused further applause by declaring that the method of Conference had been completely vindicated and he hoped that it would continue.

In his view, the policy which must warm the hearts of all Indians and also British who loved India, was the great policy of All-India Federation, which possessed limitless possibilities for the future of India.

Discussions had encouraged his belief that the final outcome of the proceedings would be a great step forward in the progressive march of India to her ultimate destiny.

Lord Reading observed that the presence of Mr. Gandhi and other delegates who did not participate in the previous session had enhanced the influence and authority of the Conference. The discussions had been conducted with the utmost frankness, but the courtesy and patience of all had triumphed.

Speaking as the oldest member of the Conference with no political ambitions but the all-pervading ambition to serve his country and the Empire.

Lord Reading said that he devoutly prayed that he might live to see an All-India Federation in being and that a pros-

perous and happy federated India might remain a willing partner in the Empire.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu asked whether Britain to-morrow would respond to agony or to hope of people of India? They were dying under the sweat and anguish of slavery and no more promises, however, sweet, would assuage their pain. When the delegates returned to India they must take back some substantial alternative to the demand for Independence. She referred to Lord Reading's allusion to equal partnership and said that that was something the best mind in India could appreciate but only on its own terms. Other Dominions were held by the silken cord of kinship but India at present was held by fetter and until the fetter was broken there could be no talk of equal friendship. She asked the Premier to make the ideal of equal partnership real.

Many arguments, including the communal difference, had been advanced on the subject of India's preparedness for freedom. She maintained that it was in welding together all divergent interests that the glory of India could be maintained. It was not by mathematical calculations alone that one could solve the vital issue of liberty.

Referring to the Depressed Classes Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said that the Hindu community should be pledged to remove the blot and give them an equal place in all things. She eulogised the attitude of the Princes in declaring in favour of the Federation. They had realised that they were Indians first and Princes afterwards and their only security lay in the allegiance of their own people.

Mr. Wedgewood Benn

Mr. Benn said, much had been done to reach an agreement and if no bargain was reached it was due to the fact that the

Government's intentions were not definitely known. There were still great difficulties to be overcome and he advised the Premier not to allow "the work to be continued by experts to be inspired by diehards."

Mr. Benn urged that the first step should be the continuance of the work by the present Conference, for, if rightly understood and handled, the Conference could do no more for good understanding and sound constitutional arrangement between Britain and India than all the blue-books in the world. The Conference should be the Secretary of State's bodyguard. The delegates should not be allowed to return until pledges of co-operation had been exacted from them.

Mr. Benn argued that no final decision was possible until the communal problem was solved, but he suggested that the Conference should draw up heads of understanding between Britain and India imposing reciprocal obligations on both British and their Indian colleagues. That was the second step. The third step was for the Premier to get Parliamentary ratification.

"Go from this Indian assembly at St. James's", said Mr. Benn, "to the British assembly at St. Stephens and ask them to ratify the heads of understanding. Then ask the colleagues here to take them back and invite and secure ratification there."

Mr. Benn did not forget the work before the Secretary of State. His problem was urgent. Violence and anarchy were raising their heads. Crime must be punished and punished swiftly.

Whatever Government was in power a strong Government in India was needed, but a strong Government was not one supported solely by route marches, ordinances, short credits obtained by exorbitant rates of interests and guns. Government could only be really strong if it rested on the assent of people.

"We can get the co-operation of good citizens and a strong Government backed up by patriots? It is here. Here is willing co-operation, if we can only seize it."

Mr. Wedgewood Benn, concluding amid prolonged applause a speech in which he stressed the responsibility resting both in the Premier and the Secretary of State, said, "Do not let tomorrow be a day of pronouncement followed by compliments. Let it be a day of reciprocal takings. Let it be a Treaty of Goodwill".

Sir T. B. Saprú

Sir Tej Bahadur Saprú strongly repudiated the suggestion that the Conference had been a failure. He said the idea of an All-India Federation had taken deep root. It was the only possible programme to which he would cling unless its absurdity and the impossibility were demonstrated. The Princes were democratic enough to identify themselves with India's national interest. It was neither just nor fair to allege that they had gone back on the idea.

Sir T. B. Saprú added that any scheme of mere Provincial Autonomy was doomed to failure. No party in India would accept it. Sir T. B. Saprú begged the Government to think twice before adopting the old-fashioned instalment system of reforms. He urged Government not to abandon the Conference method but to have plans ready and put them into operation in continuation of the work of the Conference.

Sir Akbar Hydari

Sir Akbar Hydari declared that the Federation was more firmly entrenched than ever. He suggested that simultaneously with Provincial Autonomy the Centre should be reconstructed on the lines of all-India Federal Centre with necessary safeguards and reservations. He contemplated in this connection the constitution, as a temporary measure, of a Joint Standing

Committee from both Houses of the present legislature, with which should be associated representatives of the Chamber of Princes and also of the States which had not joined that Chamber.

Sir A. Hydari said that Bihar must be regarded as an Indian State unit under the sovereignty of the Nizam. Sir A. Hydari added that, while safeguarding his rights, the Nizam did not wish to deny the subjects of Bihar as great a measure of autonomy as British Indian Provinces.

Sir G. H. Hidayatullah

Sir G. H. Hidayatullah agreed that Provincial Autonomy alone would not work. He appealed to Mr. Gandhi to solve the communal problem as, if it was not settled, Mussalmans would resort to Civil Disobedience, with resulting chaos. India welcomed the adhesion of the Princes because they had accepted the principle of Democracy and their action would lead to a united India.

Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao

Mr. Ramachandra Rao generally agreed with the Federation scheme but regretted that the viewpoint of the States' peoples had been inadequately considered. He appealed to the Princes to make all reasonable concessions to their subjects' political aspirations.

Mr. Ramachandra Rao drew attention to the importance of redistribution of the frontiers of British Indian Provinces. He criticised the pace of Indianisation of the Army and declared that Provincial Autonomy alone would not be acceptable.

Sir P. Sethna

Sir P. Sethna contested the view that the Conference had failed and though he would have referred the Government to make their intentions known beforehand, he declared that the

Round Table Conference had acquainted the British with the exact position in India and awakened them to a sense of their responsibility.

Sir P. Sethna sounded a warning as to the disastrous consequences of introducing only Provincial Autonomy and having examined the proposed safeguards with regard to which he found some points for criticism, he said that the time had come for British trusteeship to cease and he was confident that it would cease because he relied on British fairplay and justice. Sir P. Sethna also entered a plea that a few members of the Indian Round Table Conference should be added to Burma Round Table Conference.

Mr. Sher Mahomed

Mr. Sher Mahomed dealt with Defence. He supported the proposed Indian Defence Committee, which should include a representative of the enlisted classes. He warned against imperilling the country's safety by a reduction of the fighting forces.

Referring to the proposals for opening the enlistment to all classes, he insisted that it was essential not to allow the deterioration of the present standard declaring that the units raised during the war from non-enlisted classes had proved a hopless failure. Finally, he urged that ex-soldiers should enjoy the franchise and receive adequate representation in legislatures

Sardar Sampuran Singh

Sardar Sampuran Singh drew attention to the grave economic condition in India and, while agreeing with the inadvisability of reducing the size and efficiency of the Army he suggested that retrenchment could be effected by substituting the Indian troops for British. Sardar Sampuran Singh urged the necessity of restoring faith in British justice and fairness.

The Maharao of Cutch

The Maharao of Cutch said that the Federation deserved sympathetic consideration though the right method for the Princes to enter the Federation was still to be determined. He noted with satisfaction the British Government's assurances that the rights and interests of the States and their people would be safeguarded. The consideration shown to the maritime states was an example that such attention would encourage the states to enter the Federation enthusiastically. The Princes were second to none in their desire to promote India's progress but they adhered rigidly to the British connection. The promises made to India must be fulfilled. Otherwise he was afraid to think of the consequences but he was sure that the Government would give the right lead.

Dr. B. S. Moonji

Dr. Moonji contended that neither the communal failure nor the Princes' hesitancy constituted a bar to achieving Dominion Status which he had come to demand on behalf of the Mahasabha.

He would welcome the Princes into the Federation, but pending their decision a constitution for British India should be evolved. He expressed the opinion that the agreed solution of the Minorities' problem should follow on the attainment of full Responsible Government. Otherwise it could be referred to the League of Nations.

He pleaded for greater representation to the Central Provinces in the Federal Legislature. He claimed a declaration of Fundamental Rights for States' subjects. He criticised the Minorities Agreement and said he was opposed to stereotyping Untouchability by giving the Depressed Classes separate electorates

Mr. R. Srinivasan

Mr. Srinivasan reiterating the demands of the Depressed Classes insisted on the necessity of special representation by Separate Electorates, which must not be regarded from the viewpoint of their effect on Hindu religion and society, but whether they would give the Depressed Classes real representation. Mr. Srinivasan complained that the claims of the Depressed Classes were denied recognition in some quarters and said that in those circumstances they were not prepared to support any scheme of responsible Government, but if they were given sufficient representation for their protection they would consent to the fullest responsibility consistently with their safety. He added that their rights and safeguards must be embodied in the constitution.

Dr. Datta

Dr. Datta believed that representation should be by vocation and not by religion and upon a vocational basis the communal problem should be solved. The alternative was proportional representation. The States should be democratised before entering the Federation. The release of the Provinces from Central Control was indispensable to ensure the economic progress of the masses and Responsibility at Centre must be simultaneous.

Diwan Bahadur T. Raghaviah

Mr. Raghaviah gave the general support of Travancore, Cochin and Pudukottah to the main principles of the Federal Committee's reports, but said that there were certain points which required exploration and adjustment before they were decided finally.

With regard to Federation he urged larger Federal Houses in order to provide adequate representation of the States. He concluded by saying that Young India demanded responsibility

at the centre and a Federation which would ensure that it would bring the two Indias into Dominions co-operation.

Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan

Dr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan explaining the abstention of Moslems from the debates on Defence and other vital questions hoped that their attitude that it was impossible to discuss these problems until the governing problem was settled would be understood as indubitably right. He completely agreed with the principle of the Federation but thought that it would take a considerable time to work out.

Meanwhile, it was essential to satisfy the legitimate claims of the Provinces. Provincial Autonomy must be conferred without delay and immediately the Round Table Conference was over, machinery should be established to work out a Federal constitution.

Mrs. Radhabai Subbarayan

Mrs. Subbarayan declared that the Federal Structure Subcommittee had made considerable advance in the development of Federation which alone could realise Indian aspirations. She recognised the necessity of safeguards, but begged their English friends to remember that galling restrictions would only provoke resistance. There was a strong sense of financial responsibility in India and some events in the present legislatures had constituted an abnormal reaction to the existing constitution. Delegates in the past few weeks had suffered torturing anxieties.

Provincial Autonomy was as impracticable without a communal settlement as Central Responsibility. She hoped that the Government would not take the fatal step apprehended and concluded by reminding them of the necessity of safeguarding the interests of women.

Mr. Ghuznavi

Mr. Ghuznavi declared that the Moslems would never, in any circumstances, accept a constitution which did not embody the minimum safeguards that they believed to be vital to their welfare. Referring to Bengal he said that the most urgent need was for a Government which would ensure stability and safety of property and the lives of law-abiding citizens.

He was of opinion that the Federation was a distant ideal Government should introduce Provincial Autonomy immediately and pave the way for Central Responsibility later

Mr. Meher Shah

Mr. Meher Shah also asserted that Moslems would not accept a constitution unless their demands were met. He said the time had come for Government to solve the communal problem which was serious. He supported advance both at the Centre and in the Provinces.

Mr. Jamal Mahomed

Mr. Jamal Mahomed said that nobody in India would be satisfied with anything less than Responsibility at the Centre, simultaneously with Provincial Autonomy. Indians demanded full and unrestricted control of all affairs. The Indian debt was small before the War. Its present magnitude was the result of the currency policy. Indians would provide funds for Defence from self-interest. If internal disturbances arose Indians would be the sufferers and naturally they would provide against them. He feared that military safeguards would account for the taxation involved.

Sir H. Gidney

Sir Henry Gidney agreed that Provincial Autonomy alone was insufficient. He said that Anglo-Indians looked to the British Government for justice, for without Anglo-Indians India would have waited for decades for her present develop-

ment. He hoped that if the Conference proceedings were to continue in India through committees and otherwise Anglo-Indians would be represented.

Sir H. Gidney advocated a committee of inquiry into the present unsatisfactory position of the I. M. S., in order to remove the distinction between Indians and British and so destroy colour prejudice which was India's greatest curse.

Mr. G. D. Birla

Mr. Birla did not share the view that the Conference was a success. He said that the future Government would not have a shadow of control over the Finance Department. He doubted whether the Commerce Department would be transferred without safeguards and pointed out that out of a 90 crores budget 70 crores would be reserved.

Mr. Birla emphasised the necessity of reducing expenditure particularly on the Army, which should be reduced at least to the 1913 level. Mr. Birla proceeded to press for the examination of India's obligations and, referring to the demand that City financiers should be reassured, said that the Indian investor who was not represented at the Round Table Conference had equally to be considered, for he would provide money for future development.

He concluded that to-morrow he might see a change of heart, but at present he saw no sign of it.

He averred that the people of Berar did not desire in any way different treatment from British Indian provinces.

Sir P. Thakurdas

Sir P. Thakurdas dealt with the present economic conditions amidst a worldwide blizzard and referred to the taxation, currency and Gold Standard and said that the linking of the rupee to gold constituted an injustice. Sir P. Thakurdas advocated confining the borrowing to India, except with the au-

thority of the Legislature. He said that there was no question of repudiation of debt, but no further sterling debt should be incurred except to meet the existing debt. England must not say, "Because you have our money you shall not have freedom."

Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar

Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar deprecated criticism of the Conference as unsuccessful. He referred to the handicap caused by the failure of the communal settlement and also said that there was on the present occasion a lack of the last session's driving force by the British Government. Mr. Mudaliar said that "Justicites" were of opinion that it was impossible to work Provincial Autonomy alone.

Sir C. Setalvad

Sir C. Setalvad urged the difficulties in the way of a Federation, the investigation of which should not be used as a pretext for delaying Self-Government. Any scheme for reforms by instalments was doomed. Minorities must be satisfied that the majority community would go to great lengths to reach a settlement. The communal question had been exaggerated. There was no doubt that points of agreement far outnumbered points of disagreement.

Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri

Mr. Sastri wound up the debate, which had continued with two brief intervals from 10-30 in the morning until 2-12 the next day, with a moving appeal to Mr. Gandhi not to return in despair to the arid fields of Non-Co-operation.

"Yes, Mahatma, your duty hereafter is with us. You have acquired unparalleled reputation. Your influence is unequalled. Your spiritual power to command men and raise them above themselves is acknowledged throughout the world. Shall not

these great gifts be harnessed to the constructive work of the nation? Have you the heart still to lead your people, trustful and obedient, through the Valley of Humiliation if it is unnecessary?—and I contend it is no longer necessary. The thing is in our hands to-day. In your hands, more than those of any other single Indian, lies our future progress. We can be of some use. Take us in hand. With you and your chosen associates we can fashion our constitution to great ends. India will have cause to be truly thankful that you changed your plans and came here. I have read some history. British people often do wrong and take unwise courses. Nevertheless, in the long run, they return to the ways of reason, moderation and justice. This is one of the occasions when it seems to me they are in a most winning and admirable mood. Take them now and victory is ours.”

The Premier paid a tribute to Mr. Sastri's magnificent statement, which showed an insight into the heart both of India and of Britain and “approached in that way, is bound to be irresistible.”

Delegates agreed amidst applause to the Premier's proposal to send in the name of the Conference a message to the King-Emperor tendering loyal and heart-felt gratitude for favours they have again received from His Majesty adding they are deeply conscious of His Majesty's unfailing solicitude for the well-being of Princes and people of their motherland. They believe that His Majesty needs no assurance that in other parts of his realm there is a livelier sense of loyalty and devotion to His Majesty's Throne and Person.

The Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference concluded its session in a setting of the same subdued enthusiasm as last year. The Prime Minister's parting message of hope and his assurance of the Government's determination steadily to pursue the programme chalked out last year, brought

back in clear outline, the picture which some had apprehended had almost faded away.

Queen Anne's drawing room, in which the last Plenary Session was held, was packed with delegates, distinguished visitors and representatives of the press.

A large number of visitors and Press correspondents were also accommodated in the adjoining room, listening in to the speeches through loud speakers.

Precisely at 11-30 a.m., the Prime Minister rose to address the Conference and read the statement, which had the full authority of the Cabinet. He spoke for 35 minutes.

The speech was punctuated with cheers, particularly the announcement of the Frontier into a Governor's Province and the appointment of Committees in India to implement work of the Conference. His personal appeal to the communities to settle differences without the intervention of the Government made a deep impression and when the curtain was rung down on this year's session, wide expression was given by the delegates to the feeling of personal debt of gratitude to the Prime Minister, who had laboured most heroically to bring the Conference to a successful close.

The announcement that the Conference was "adjourned" was regarded as significant, several leading delegates remarking that the Conference had ended under good auspices.

The full text of the Prime Minister's speech is given in the Appendix.

CHAPTER XV PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

THE general elections and the consequent change in the position of the respective parties in England, exerted a very adverse effect on the progress of the Round Table Conference. The Labour party which was, to the best of its ability, consistently in India's favour, had suddenly lost its foothold and found itself in

a very small minority after the elections. The general election was fought more on class lines, than on important issues of political policy. Most of the wealth, organisation and social influence were ranged on one side, while the working classes were divided among themselves, a certain section electing to follow the lead of the Prime Minister. During the whole elections, no mention was made about India by any party. This glaring omission,—especially at a time when the representatives of entire India were present in London engaged in a most momentous discussion vitally affecting both India and England, on the satisfactory conclusion of which depended the future welfare of Britain to a great extent—was noted with grave misgivings by the leaders of the Indian delegation.

Indian Leaders' Statement

The fear entertained by the Indian leaders, was justified soon after the formation of the new National Government. Strong rumours began to float that the Government had decided to wind up the Conference after announcing the immediate grant of Provincial Autonomy leaving the main question of responsibility at the centre and Federation to later discussions in India. This rumour, though at first denied by the Government, later on became so persistent as to make the Indian leaders believe in its truth. A few of the Round Table delegates were also found to support this decision. The Indian leaders, meanwhile, to prevent any irrevocable decision on the part of the Cabinet regarding the question, issued a statement signed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Sir P. Sethna, Mrs. Subbarayan, Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. Ramachandra Rao, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar,

Mr. Jadhav, Mr. Tambe, Mr. Joshi, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Giri and Mr. Shiva Rao.

The statement was as follows :

"It is our considered opinion that no political party of any standing in India will in the slightest degree favour the introduction of Provincial Autonomy as the first instalment, with a mere promise of establishing responsibility on a Federal basis in future. The Conference was not called for this purpose.

"None of us would have taken the trouble to come to England to achieve merely Provincial Autonomy, which, indeed, was recommended by the Simon Commission's report. We think in the first place that no genuine Provincial Autonomy can be established without Responsibility at the Centre.

"Even if it could be established we are clearly of opinion that no party in India will be prepared to take it, and if it is intended to rely on the support of any particular class or any minority among the people of India for the working of Provincial Autonomy then we think that the position, instead of being improved, will become one of great complexity and instability and give rise to a situation which, in the best interests of both the countries, must be avoided.

"If His Majesty's Government intend to take this step it must be understood that it will not be with our consent but that it is wholly contrary to our advice and the Government must prepare to take full and sole responsibility for their action.

"We claim early fulfilment of the declaration of His Majesty's Government made on 19th January last which was explicitly reaffirmed only a few days ago by the Prime Minister on behalf of the National Government.

"Mere reiteration of it in a fresh declaration or in the preamble of a Bill for Provincial Autonomy leaving the establishment of Responsibility at the Centre to some future date will receive no support from us and will be strongly resented in

India as a complete breach of faith and as wholly inadequate to the needs of the country."

Moslems Fall in Line

In the debate which followed in the Federal Structure Committee regarding Government's policy the British Labour delegation was warmly supported by the Indian leaders in their condemnation of the Provincial Autonomy scheme without Central Responsibility. Even the Moslem delegates, who were still declining to take active part in the proceedings, expressed their disapproval of the mere Provincial Autonomy Scheme. Mr. Jinnah speaking on behalf of the Moslems stated that

"Mussalmans also feel that mere Provincial Autonomy will not command the support of better minds in India, but remember also that no constitution will be acceptable to Mussalmans unless their demands are complied with"

The European group also endorsed the same view.

Mr. Gavin Jones on behalf of the Europeans said that they stood by the principles agreed at the last session. He did not think that a measure dealing with Provincial Autonomy would be adequate.

Sir S. Hoare's Reply

Sir Samuel Hoare in reply pointed out the difficulty of the problems and said, "a number of problems which it had been hoped would be solved this year had not yet been solved. In view of this fact the Government had been considering most carefully the grave issues and when we ask you to come and consult us we ask because we wish to hear your views and not because we have already made up our minds."

"I shall convey to the Premier the views expressed by several influential members. They all expressed one view, no

doubt a very weighty view, but it is obvious that even upon the kind of questions we have been discussing this morning there is no unanimity, even though this morning's speeches are unanimous. What I undertake to do is to see that the views expressed will immediately receive the very careful attention of the Premier."

Lord Sankey Thanked

The Federal Structure Committee had finished its labours. The draft reports on the various vital questions discussed, were approved of in principle. There was a general agreement exhibited by the delegates on the solution of all the questions excepting the communal one which prevented the Moslem delegates from taking their full share in the debates. However, the Moslems falling in line with the other sections on the question of Provincial Autonomy was considered as a great gain.

As Lord Sankey was about to declare the proceedings ended, Mr. Sastri said, that he must first express the delegates' feelings of utmost confidence in Lord Sankey. The Committee's work had been of the greatest importance and although there had sometimes been sharp differences a most wonderful spirit of cordiality had prevailed on all sides. This was largely secured by the absolute impartiality of the Chairman, who never allowed the ideal of a united integral India to fade from their minds and for that as well as other reasons, they were deeply indebted to him. They could never wish in similar circumstances to have greater good fortune than to have a chairman of Lord Sankey's type and character.

Other speakers including Sir T. B. Saprú, Mr. Jinnah, the Nawab of Bhopal on behalf of the Princes and Mrs. Subhara-

yan warmly thanked Lord Sankey for his able conduct of the proceedings.

Lord Sankey's Reply

Lord Sankey, who was obviously deeply moved, confessed that he was very much touched. He said that he thought Civil Servants should have the chief share of any praise. He mentioned in this connection that, since the last session he had been presiding over Committees of seven or eight civil servants which discussed questions which came before the Federal Structure Sub-Committee. They held scores of meetings and produced memorandums of the greatest possible assistance.

Lord Sankey continued that his task though difficult, had been very pleasant. He added:

"I want to say this that, first and last and for all time, I favour a Federal India. I am not going to desert you. I am going to take good care that nobody deserts you and do not think that anyone desires to do so. In my view a Federal India is not only possible but probable and the sooner we satisfy your aspirations, the better for everybody."

"I am not going to say goodbye. I hope, I shall meet you again somewhere, some day and hope that I shall be one of the first to congratulate India on achieving what I know to be its ambition, what I know will bring peace and prosperity at last. I thank you." (Loud applause.)

The proceedings then terminated.

CHAPTER XVI

DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT

At the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference the Prime Minister made a statement explaining the policy of the Government with regard to the Conference and the Indian demand as expressed by the delegates during the proceedings. His statement was

governed to a large extent by the results of the private conversations which he carried on with the leaders of the various delegations rather than on the actual views expressed by the delegates during the Conference.

Very strong pressure was brought to bear on the Prime Minister by a section of the Conservative members of Parliament led by Mr. Winston Churchill to have a debate in the Commons before the speech at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference summing up of the results of the session and restating the Government's policy was delivered. Mr. Bracken, a Conservative member asked for an undertaking from the Prime Minister that no statement of the Government's future policy on India would be given before first obtaining the approval of Parliament. But Mr. MacDonald declined to give any such undertaking.

Premier's Motion

On December 1st, a paper setting out the Government's policy on Indian affairs was circulated to the members of Parliament. On 2nd December, the Premier moved the following motion on Indian policy in the Commons.

"That this House approves the Indian policy of His Majesty's Government as set out in the Command Paper (Indian Round Table Conference) presented to Parliament on December 1."

Mr. MacDonald referred to the various pledges given to India first by Queen Victoria and then by her successors and also by the successive Prime Ministers and said that the time had come to fulfil those pledges. He referred further to the Government of India Act of 1919 and the Simon Commission and traced the gradual growth of the idea of the Round Table Confe-

rence. He emphasised that the expression "gradual development" must not be interpreted by the House as something it could fulfil at its own leisure. Those words, he said must be interpreted to mean that the House was vigilantly and carefully watching the progress of affairs in India and when the right time arrived, to increase the amount of self-government that India enjoyed. He also observed that the political capacity of India was solid, widespread and had enormously increased during recent years. He referred to his attempts to solve the communal problem and his failure and observed that the non-solution of the communal problem must not be considered as a bar to further progress in India's political development.

Sir S. Hoare's Speech

Sir S. Hoare in a lengthy but powerful speech explained more clearly the Government's policy than was done by Mr. MacDonald. His speech was clear and unambiguous and gave out the exact position of the Government on Indian policy. He said,

that the pledge given in last January by the Labour Government must be fulfilled. He was of the opinion that phrases and generalities often mislead people both Indian and English. He did not attach much value to such phrases as "Dominion Status" and "Central Responsibility" but will consider the actual facts, as these phrases are interpreted one way by some and another way by others. Regarding Safeguards, he said that they were not shackles on India's liberty but necessary stays without which the new Indian constitution would lack stability.

Sir S. Hoare, was constantly interrupted in the course of his speech by Mr. Winston Churchill, who proposed an amendment to the Premier's motion as follows:

"Provided also that the Government's policy effectively safeguards British trade with and in India from adverse prejudicial discrimination; further provided that no extension of Self-Government in India at this juncture shall impair the ultimate responsibility of Parliament for peace, order and good Government in the Indian Empire."

Result of the Debate

Sir John Simon, Sir Austin Chamberlain, Mr. Lansbury, Mr. Baldwin, Miss Eleanor Rathbone and others spoke opposing the amendment and supported the Premier's motion.

Mr. Churchill's amendment was defeated by 369 votes to 43.

Mr. MacDonald's motion was carried without a division only a few Labourite Left Wingers standing up to oppose it.

Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Maxton, Mr. Kirkwood and Mr. McGovern had given notice of an amendment urging the Government to restore full Independence to India but there was no time for moving it as the debate automatically ended at 11 p.m.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LORDS' DEBATE

ON 8th December, Lord Lothian, on behalf of the Government, moved a resolution in the House of Lords for the approval of Government's Indian policy.

In the course of his speech, he said that in the long run, repression was no remedy and political discontent required a political cure. He then proceeded to review Indian policy since 1917. He believed that Mr. MacDonald's statement commanded the agreement of the great mass of responsible opinion in India.

"If we went faster, we would imperil the structure of the Indian Government and therefore the peace, liberty and the secu-

rity of the Indian people. If we went slower we would be deprived of the consent and the co-operation of Indians without which the policy of 1917 could not be realised.

"The Round Table Conference would re-assemble in some form and thereafter Government would present a draft constitution for the consideration of Parliament."

Lord Lloyd's Amendment

Lord Lloyd in moving criticised the White Paper as dangerously vague and said if all the safeguards were effective, responsibility would be a mere shadow while if real responsibility was introduced the safeguards would be worthless

Lord Sankey

Lord Sankey declared that the British record in India had stood the test of time. He paid a tribute to British achievements in many spheres and said that as a result of the British policy of ordered evolution, a body of educated and cultured opinion, nurtured in British political ideals and sharing British political ambition was to-day pressing for a further step along a road which it was ready to tread with us. He was convinced that Government's policy would produce a happy and contented India and appealing to Lord Lloyd to withdraw the amendment as likely to excite suspicion in India, expressed the opinion that only India's doubt of Britain's sincerity could prevent success and nothing would more effectively dispel such a doubt than the House of Lords' unopposed affirmation of the Government's declaration. Concluding he said, "a niggardly advance would mean chaos in India. The present opportunity may never recur. Let us seize it."

Other Members

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Reading, Lord Lytton, Lord Snell, Lord Peel, The Marquis of

Zetland, Lord Hailsham, Lord Islington and some others supported the motion, while Lords Lamington, Sumner, Brentford, Salisbury and others supported the amendment. Lord Middleton moved for an adjournment of the debate.

Lord Irwin

Lord Irwin, in a maiden speech, declared that the Round Table Conference had abundantly vindicated the conference method and he had not the slightest doubt that the chances of a solution of the great Imperial problem had been immeasurably advanced by giving India the right to be joint architect of her constitution. Lord Irwin agreed that it would be a folly to underestimate the immense difficulties, but it would equally be a folly to underestimate the amount of common ground achieved by the Round Table Conference.

Lord Irwin did not doubt that Parliament was prepared to give whatever powers appeared necessary against terrorists or any potential resumption of civil trouble, but pointed out the futility of mere repression as a remedy for political discontent and said that only a Government that was able to convince reasonable men that it was pursuing vigorously and determinedly with a real intention to achieve a constructive policy aiming at an agreement could appeal for their support if it was compelled to employ severe measures in other directions.

Lord Irwin proceeded to argue that it was a profound mistake to treat the Indian difficulty as the work of an insignificant minority. He revealed that before the beginning of civil disobedience, he consulted experienced men in India on the possibility of treating the situation by inaugurating such a rigid repression as would create "a desert which we should then call peace." "The steps examined included suppression not only the Press and public speech and the closing of the Councils, but he had always returned to the conclusion that it would lead to retrogression and

not to progress. Therefore they had to turn their minds to a well constructed agreement.

Revolt of the East

Referring to Lord Lloyd's speech, Lord Irwin said:

Lord Lloyd had referred to a litter of paper constitutions in eastern countries, but were they not to learn anything from the stirrings in Turkey, Iraq, Persia, China and Japan which had manifested themselves in different ways? He believed it was a profound delusion to treat the events in India as the work of a minority which, firmly and effectively handled, would fade away and give no more trouble. He expressed the opinion that if a system of political democracy did not suit India, once she was allowed freedom to choose she would evolve the necessary variations. He welcomed the fact that the Prime Minister's statement had raised British policy above fear of infraction by political accidents.

Result

The Earl of Middleton's motion for the adjournment of the debate on the Government's Indian policy was defeated by 106 votes to 58.

The Government's motion approving of their Indian policy was agreed to.

Lord Lloyd did not press his amendment to a division.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STATES' PEOPLES' DELEGATION

On September 14th the Working Committee of the Indian States' Peoples Conference passed a resolution appointing Prof. Abhyankar and Amrithlal D. Shet as members of their delegation to proceed to England and put forward their minimum demands before the Round

Table delegates. The delegation sailed on the 19th by the *S. S. Kaisar-i-Hind*.

Their Work in London

The work of the delegation in London may be gathered from an extract from a cable despatched by them to the Publicity Officer, Indian States' Peoples Conference at Ranpur, dated October 23rd :

"The delegation did important propaganda this week about the Federal Court, demanding safeguards for the protection of States Peoples' fundamental rights. The delegation demanded that a provision should be made in the Federal constitution enabling the States peoples to proceed against their States if the Federal law of fundamental rights is violated.

"Four members of the Round Table Conference, as also Mahatmaji, have promised strongly to support this demand. Mahatmaji reiterated his promise to remain adamant on our three demands and would break the Conference if necessary for the same.

"Lord Olivier, who shows great interest in the States' Peoples' problem, promised to raise a debate for States Peoples in the House of Lords. The Princes and British Indians are agreed on the financial proposals based on Mahatmaji's formula, which suggests the status quo at present and the consent of the States to be obtained when the new taxation is necessary. Though the Princes are agreed, Moslem members want the States to be taxed from the start. Negotiations therefore are proceeding for the final decision. The States are agreed to accept the Federal Court's jurisdiction in the case of violation of the Federal laws.

"Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao has agreed to place before the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference the minimum demands of the States Peoples as embodied in the resolution of the third session of the Indian States People's Conference."

Prof. Abhyankar's Views

On return of the delegation to India, Prof. Abhyankar, interviewed by the correspondent of the *Hindu* regarding the result of their mission said among other things,

It was not possible to get any sympathetic hearing from the Conservative leaders. The British Indian leaders were already committed to their views expressed in the last session of the Federal Structural Committee. They however saw some who were newly appointed to the Committee. They saw Mr. Lansbury and Lord Olivier who promised to help when the Government measure would be before Parliament. Dr. Laski also promised his support when anything definite was placed before the public by Government.

Gandhiji's Advice

They were strictly following the advice of Mahatma Gandhi and as he did not favour any public agitation either in the Press or on the platform their work lay only in lobbying important people. Mahatmaji believes that we should not close the door of negotiations with the Princes and embarrass him by an open agitation against the Princes. We were under restraint so to speak and had to work. We sent three statements to the Lord Chancellor on the Federal Court, on the fundamental rights to the States' people and on the representation on the Federal legislature."

Attitude of Princes

Regarding the attitude of the Princes' delegation Mr. Abhyankar said they were quite hostile to our aspiration. They strongly insisted on sending their nominees to both the Houses of the Federal legislatures. The question of fundamental rights did not come up for discussion.

Sir Mirza M. Ismail

Sir Mirza Ismail, the distinguished Dewan of Mysore consented to agree to giving the right of appeal to the States' people to the Federal Court. Sir Ismail also wished the States to send representatives of the people at least to the popular House. Sir Ismail in addition did a great service to the second and third class States by rigidly insisting on the appointment of an independent committee to distribute seats between the various States. Sir Ismail's proposals about the Upper Chamber were very thoughtful and would serve to remove many of the anomalies that would be created by excessive weightages and nominees of the Princes. Mahatma favoured this proposal, if at all any Upper House was devised.

Confidence in Congress

If any workable constitution is evolved and to which Mahatmaji agrees we are confident that he would insist on the representation of the States' people, on fundamental rights being guaranteed to them in the constitution and on giving the jurisdiction to the supreme court to protect them. He has reassured us of his undoubted support in this respect. In the absence of the support of any other British Indian political parties, this sympathy with our cause of the sole representative of the Indian National Congress is very encouraging and our appeal to the Working Committee of the Congress has not proved in vain.

CHAPTER XIX**THE CURRENCY QUESTION**

EVER since the suspension of the gold standard in England and following that event, the linking of the rupee with the sterling, Indian financiers, businessmen and members of the Assembly have been protesting

against the act as being inimical to the best interests of India. Leading Indian members of the Round Table delegation determined to make every effort possible to persuade the Secretary of State for India to alter his decision on the Currency question of India. Sir Samuel Hoare on the other hand, wanted to convince the Indian delegates about the fairness and soundness of his decision on the question.

Sir S. Hoare's Speech

In the course of a speech delivered before the members of the Federal Structure Committee on the gold crisis in Britain, on the very day of the suspension of the gold standard, Sir Samuel Hoare after briefly narrating the events which led to the decision referred to its effects on India and said,

"I feel a special responsibility in this crisis for India. Since the fixing of the rupee by statute at 18d. sterling has until to-day been synonymous with gold and for all practical purposes the stability of the Indian exchange has been based on sterling as Indian trade is financed through sterling. The greater part of Indian's external obligations is in terms of sterling. To follow gold and so increase the sterling value of the rupee at this juncture is, I am sure, you will agree, out of the question."

"It has therefore been decided to maintain the present currency standard on a sterling basis. I am satisfied that this is the right course for India and is most conducive to Indian interests. The Government of India will, accordingly, continue the policy under which stability in terms of sterling has in the past been secured."

Various meetings were held at the India Office with a view to discuss the question more elaborately and arrive at a common agreement in which the leading Round Table delegates including the Rulers of Bikaner and

Bhopal, Sir Akbar Hydari, Sir Mirza Ismail, The Aga Khan, Sir T. B. Sapru, Sir Mahomed Shafi, Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. A. Rangaswami Aiyangar, Sirdar Ujjal Singh, Mr. Jinnah, Sir M. Dadabhoy, Sir P. Sethna and Mr. Benthall were present. At some later meetings, Pandit Malaviya, Sir P. Thakurdas and Mr. Birla were also present. The discussions ranged over a wide field and the searching questions put by the Indian delegates were answered by Sir Henry Strakosh, the financial expert.

Gandhiji on Currency

Gandhiji clinched the issues by demanding answers regarding the desperate condition of the agriculturists owing to the unthinkable fall in prices compelling them to sell jewellery and pay taxes and the money lenders. He asked why price stimulation through the fall of gold value should be arrested by the rupee being pegged to the sterling and how the Government proposed to relieve the agriculturist by a proper currency and fiscal policy.

It was admitted that the fall in the rupee below 18d. was prevented, a rise above was not prevented and that so far steps had not been taken to prevent the export of private gold.

Thakurdas and Birla

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas pointed out that the last Currency Commission had recorded a preference for the Gold Exchange Standard.

Sir H. Strakosh replied that it was then never contemplated that so many countries would abandon the Gold Standard.

Mr. Birla maintained that the rupee was not strictly linked with the sterling since the Government of India did not accept sterling against rupees as the result of which, though the rupee could not fall below 1s. 6d. it theoretically could rise above. Gold

was exported as the result of the Government of India's buying price being below the world price.

Sir Henry Strakosh maintained that India would have to export gold to meet her liabilities whatever her currency system, to which it was pointed out that Britain had stopped the export of gold and it was explained that the remedy lay in stimulating exports and discouraging imports.

Sir H. Strakosh instanced the results of the heavy depreciation of other currencies and pointed out that debtors and those with capital abroad gained, but wage-earners lost while India would have to pay more in respect of her sterling liabilities.

Though the subject was discussed in all its bearings together with the allied problems of debt, taxation, finance, etc., all of which resulted in a more or less satisfactory solution, the currency problem alone could not obtain a satisfactory solution. The subject was also ventilated at other meetings, as for instance, when Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar addressed a select group of Commons members interested in Indian finance and currency questions explained,

"How Indian currency was at Whitehall's mercy and how Indian advice in successive currency commissions had been rejected and stressed the need for a currency free of official control."

CHAPTER XX

GANDHIJI'S OTHER ACTIVITIES

MAHATMAJI'S attendance at the Round Table Conference formed only a small part of his activities in England. He spent more time in interviewing members of the Government and other leading personages in England. A good part of his time was also devoted to unofficial meetings with the other delegates to the Conference for discussing various outstanding questions

including the communal one. The short intervals that ensued in the midst of his Conference duties were devoted to visiting various places of interest in England where he freely mixed with representatives of all classes of people in the country. In spite of his "strange" political opinions, with which none in England, nor many among the Round Tablers seemed to be in agreement, he was received wherever he went with the utmost kindness and hospitality. The crowds mobbed him in the streets wherever he was found. The members of the Government treated him with the utmost deference. He was invited to the Buckingham Palace to a party given to the Round Table delegates where he went with his loin-cloth on and had a few minutes' conversation with Their Majesties the King and Queen. Mahatmaji was deeply impressed by the universal kindness with which he was received in England.

Visit of Charlie Chaplin

The strangest visitor he came across in England, with whom he could have had absolutely nothing in common was, the world-famous comedian of the films, Charlie Chaplin, and it was stranger still to know that Mahatmaji had never heard his name before. The comedian, however, suited himself to the scene and gaily chatted with Gandhiji on the subject, it is reported, of the good or evil of machines. Chaplin sat for a while with Gandhiji, prayed with him on the carpet and then went away immensely pleased.

Visit to Manchester

Mahatma Gandhi, the most uncompromising advocate of the boycott of foreign cloth in India, paid a visit to Manchester, the biggest centre of the trade where

he was received with a friendly warmth which was truly remarkable. He met mill-owners and operatives and in informal talks gave expression to his views regarding India's future trade in *foreign cloth*. He dispelled any hopes which they might have had of regaining their former trade with India, but he, at the same time assured them that there was nothing to prevent India giving a preference to Manchester cloth of such qualities as she may desire to import from abroad.

Eton, Oxford & Cambridge

Gandhiji visited the famous educational centres of Britain, notably Eton, Oxford and Cambridge, where he was warmly welcomed by professors with whom he talked on various topics. He also addressed various student organisations on the trend of current politics.

Reception by London Indians

The Indian residents of London, comprising mostly of merchants and students gave separate receptions to Gandhiji where he addressed them chiefly on political matters. He also advised the Indian students as to how they should fashion their life and conduct consistent with their national dignity and self-respect. In a reception arranged for him at the Guildhouse, London, Gandhiji was presented with a purse containing £575 by the Indian community of which £400 was said to have been collected by the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

Visits to Celebrities

Among the noted celebrities whom Gandhiji visited in England were Mr. George Bernard Shaw, Mr. Arthur Henderson and Mr. Lloyd George. Gandhiji had about

three hours talk with Mr. Lloyd George. He met Col. Maddock, the famous English Surgeon, who saved his life by performing a difficult operation on him for appendicitis while he was last in Yerrawadda Jail in 1924. He also met Lord Irwin with whom he no doubt had a detailed talk on the political situation.

Prof. Einstein's Message

Gandhiji received a message from Prof. Einstein, the great German Scientist and Philosopher as follows :

"You have shown by all you have done that we can achieve the ideal even without resorting to violence. We can conquer those votaries of violence by the non-violent method. Your example will inspire and help humanity to put an end to a conflict based on violence with international help and co-operation guaranteeing peace to the world.

"With this expression of my devotion and admiration I hope to be able to meet you face to face."

Meeting with Prelates

Gandhiji paid a visit to Canterbury, the residence of the Archbishop and famous for its Cathedral. He was the guest of Dean Johnson. He had very cordial conversation with the Archbishop and several other Bishops. He also attended evening service at the Cathedral.

Gandhiji's Birthday

Gandhiji's birthday the 2nd of October was celebrated by the Independent Labour Party, the Gandhi Society and the Congress League with a fruitarian dinner, to which he was invited. About 300 people were

present. A spinning wheel was presented to him on behalf of those present.

Visit to other Places

Besides the above, Gandhiji visited various other places in England, chief of them being Chichester, Nottingham and Birmingham. He also visited the Islington Dairy Show, where, the goat which was feeding him with milk and which had been named after him won the first prize.

Other Visitors

Mrs. Robeson, wife of the celebrated Negro actor Paul Robeson visited Gandhiji and had a few minutes' talk with him. Mrs. Ghose, wife of Mr. Sailendranath Ghose, President of the American Section of the Indian National Congress and her two daughters, Miriam Ghose and Lilavati Ghose aged seven and four years respectively, called on Mahatmaji and invited him to America. But Gandhiji regretfully declined the proposal.

Other Addresses

Gandhiji addressed various other meetings in England, chief among them being the Temperance Council, Peace Workers' meeting, the School Students' Union and the Postal Workers' Union. He gave an impressive rendering to the Columbia Gramophone Company of his reflections on the existence of God which lasted six and a half minutes. He broadcasted a message to America on the very day of his arrival in England a newspaper extract of which is given below :

"Hitherto nations had fought like brutes. But Indians felt that the law governing brute creation was not the law that

should guide the human race. He would personally wait, if necessary for ages rather than seek to attain freedom of India by bloody means. The world was sick to death of blood-spilling and he flattered himself with the belief that perhaps it would be the privilege of India to show the world the way out.

He invited all the great nations of the earth heartily to co-operate with India in her mighty struggle. He expressed deep humiliation that Hindus and Moslems were flying at each other's throats and Hindus regarded millions of their own kin as "Untouchable." He emphasised that in the struggle for self-purification Indians had assigned the foremost place to the removal of the curse of Untouchability, the attainment of national unity and the abolition of the curse of drink.

He appealed to the conscience of the world on behalf of the semi-starved millions of India."

Foreign Invitations

Gandhiji received pressing invitations from civic, social and religious organisations from America, France, Germany, Italy, Palestine, Egypt, Hungary and Denmark.

The Rev. J. H. Holmes cabled to Gandhiji to postpone his visit to America.

American Negroes also pressed upon Gandhiji an invitation to visit them.

CHAPTER XXI

GANDHIJI'S RETURN

As had already planned, Mahatmaji was to have visited various countries in Europe after the close of the Round Table Conference before reaching India. He had received invitations from several organisations—political, social, religious, temperance and humanitarian—as well as from famous *savants*, from various

countries in Europe, most of which, if not all, Mahatmaji was willing to accept. But, as regards to America, he had no intention of visiting that country inspite of numerous invitations, and though as a matter of fact, appreciation about the Mahatma appeared to have been greater in that country than in any other. His reason for declining to visit America was not definitely known but it was thought it might have been due to the Rev. J. H. Holmes' early warning to Mahatmaji not to visit America at that time.

As it afterwards happened, Mahatmaji's proposed tour of Europe had also to be curtailed considerably in consequence of messages received by him from India, according to which, though his presence was desired in this country, it was left to his option whether to return immediately or not. But Mahatmaji decided on returning quickly.

Return Programme

Gandhiji had eventually decided to leave England on the 5th December, when all functions connected with the Round Table Conference would have been over. Reaching the continent by the cross channel boat, he would spend the remaining part of that day at Paris and thence proceed to Switzerland. In Switzerland, Mahatmaji intended to stay with Romain Roland at his beautiful country residence at Villeneuve for a few days and afterwards proceed through Italy, *via* Rome to Brindisi and embark on board the *S. S. Pilsna* reaching Bombay on the 28th. A flying visit to Cairo in the course of his voyage was also included in his programme.

On the Eve of Departure

On the day previous to his departure, Gandhiji had a long interview first with the Prime Minister and

afterwards with Sir Samuel Hoare. He also had private interviews with leading delegates to the Round Table Conference in the course of which it was understood that the future work of the Round Table Committees were discussed. Pandit Malaviya and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu decided to stay in London for some more time.

Departure

On the morning of the day of his departure from England, Mahatmaji rose as usual at 4 a.m. and after attending to his morning routine, went through the touching ceremony of leave-taking with the inmates of Kingsley Hall. Neighbours crowded the streets and wished him *bon voyage*. He drove direct to Victoria Station at 8-30 a.m. Gandhiji's staff had already arrived at the platform to see that all arrangements were complete. A large number of friends, both Indian and English had gathered at the station among whom were Messrs. Sen Gupta, Horace Alexander, Reginald Reynolds, Polak, Lansbury, Dr. Datta and Pandit Malaviya. Mrs. Naidu was to accompany Gandhiji up to Folkstone. As the train steamed out of the platform, Mahatmaji and party stood at the carriage window and smilingly acknowledged the cheers and cries of "Bande Mataram" and "Gandhi-ki-Jai", enthusiastically raised by his friends on the platform. It was noted that a large number of Gandhi caps were worn by Gandhiji's friends at the platform both Indian and English.

Parting Message

On arrival at Folkstone, Mahatmaji was met by the station master, who accompanied him to the Channel steamer on which he immediately embarked. Mrs.

Naidu returned to London. In a parting message to the British people, Mahatmaji said to Reuter :

"I am glad to be returning to India, but sorry to have to leave England. That is my happy condition". "The English people should believe me" continued Gandhiji "when I say that, if it falls to my lot to fight them, I will be engaged in a fight never out of hatred, but most surely out of love, even as I have fought some of my dearest relations. Hence, I am determined to make every effort to continue co-operation as far as it is consistent with national self-respect.

Gandhiji added that he had always asked Indians to fight for liberty without hatred against the English. As the result of his visit to England, he felt it more incumbent on him now to impress on his fellow-countrymen that they should have no bitterness against the English."

Welcome at Paris

Paris, the gayest city of the world, turned out at its best to welcome heartily the ascetic of India. On the station, Mahatmaji was met by members of the Indian community and a posse of police at the head of the Commissioner, who escorted him walking arm in arm, through the surging crowd. After facing a battery of cameras, Mahatmaji drove straight to the Hotel at St. Lazare, where he put up during his few hours' stay in the gay capital. He was in much demand during that short interval to attend various functions arranged in his honour all of which he fulfilled. He addressed a meeting largely composed of youths, in the course of which he urged upon the French to study the Indian Independence movement based on truth and non-violence.

With Romain Roland

"Villa Lionette," the picturesque country house of Romain Roland situated on a poetic spot overlooking the little town of Villeneuve on the extremity of Lake Geneva was prepared several days beforehand to accommodate Mahatmaji for a few days on his return to India. Mahatmaji was extremely glad to accept the hospitality of Romain Roland, one of the most famous of *savants* and pacifists in Europe. Though it was not customary in Switzerland to milk goats at that time of the year, M. Roland had persuaded the peasants to break their tradition in order to supply Mahatmaji with milk. Keeping Villeneuve as his headquarters, Mahatmaji made short excursions to Lausanne and Geneva and also visited some Swiss villages and studied the conditions of their life.

At Lausanne

Speaking at Lausanne to a crowded audience at the Town Hall, Gandhiji said :

'Europe was suffering from a malady caused by the burden of armaments and most countries were on the verge of moral and material bankruptcy'.

He continued that the contagion had spread to Asia, but hope was coming from India, which was endeavouring to secure independence by pacific means. He invited his hearers to study the movement impartially and critically "and if you conclude that the movement is conducted non-violently and truthfully, place yourselves on our side. You can mould European opinion."

At Geneva

Geneva, the capital of Switzerland, the seat of the League of Nations and the city of international repute,

where many important peace conferences had been held even in former times, was the scene of Gandhiji's visit on the 10th December. Though Gandhiji did not visit the League Secretariat, his activities in that city were none the less important.

Addressing a crowded audience at the Victoria Hall, (built by an Englishman and dedicated to the memory of the great Queen) Gandhiji "referred to India's experience in non-violence and suggested its adoption by the League of Nations for enforcing its decisions. He also urged other nations to follow Switzerland's example of disarmament and declared that non-violence was made of sterner stuff than conscription."

Visiting some villages in the vicinity, Mahatmaji was impressed with the spinning and weaving activities carried on by the peasants in their homes. He was greatly interested in the demonstration of weaving of mats from strips of rags and himself took a hand at the loom.

Through Italy

Leaving Villeneuve and its pleasant memories, Mahatmaji entrained for Rome, *en route* to Brindisi. As the train slowed at Milan, Mahatmaji opened his carriage window and smilingly waved to the small crowd gathered to see him. The station-master offered Gandhiji a first-class carriage free, which he gladly accepted.

The train reached Rome on the 12th morning, and Mahatmaji alighting, was taken straight to his Villa by General Moris, formerly head of civil aviation in Italy, whose guest he was during his stay in Rome. Gandhiji could not see the Pope as he never gave audience in the evening, nor on a Sunday as the next day happened to be. Gandhiji, however, visited the Vatican Museum

and Library and also inspected the Royal School of the Montessori method.

Mahatmaji visited Signor Mussolini at 6 p.m. on the same day and had a private conversation with him. The details of the conversation were however not known but it was stated that the Duce Chief put a volley of searching questions re: the Indian situation.

Princes Maria, the youngest daughter of the King of Italy, unexpectedly paid a visit to Gandhiji shortly before Gandhiji left for Brindisi.

The Princess conversed with Gandhiji for half an hour and also attended evening prayers with him.

On Board S. S. "Pilsna"

On the 14th December, Gandhiji embarked on board the S. S. *Pilsna* at Brindisi, bound for Bombay.

At Port Said, Mahatmaji met a number of deputationists including one of the "Wafd" party of Egypt. Though he was invited by Nahas Pasha, the leader of the "Wafd" party of Egypt, to pay a flying visit to Cairo on his return voyage and Mahatmaji had accepted it, he had to abandon the programme in view of the shortness of the steamer's stay at Suez. This caused a great disappointment, not only to Egyptians but also to the large number of Indian residents in Egypt, who were enthusiastically preparing to honour Gandhiji.

Landing at Bombay

Gandhiji was given a very enthusiastic reception on landing on the morning of the 28th December.

The S. S. *Pilsna* berthed at 8 a.m. When the gangway was lowered, Mrs. Gandhi, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, the members of the Working Committee and prominent Congressmen went on board.

Gandhiji, patted Mrs. Gandhi when the latter approached him with hands clasped and touched his feet.

Mr. Vallabhbhai garlanded Mahatmaji amidst deafening cries of "Gandhi-ki-Jai". Gandhiji looked happy at meeting his co-workers, and embraced Dr. Ansari and Mr. Abbas Tyabji. Gandhiji, however did not speak, as he was observing his day of silence.

The Bombay Congress Committee had made elaborate arrangements for receiving Gandhiji. By arrangement with the steamship company, they had issued special passes for select friends to go on board to meet Gandhiji. Admission to the Mole Station was by tickets issued free by the Congress Committee.

The Mole Station was gaily decorated with tri-coloured Congress flags, banners and buntings. A special dais was erected in the centre of the station-hall.

Gandhiji was conducted from the boat to the special platform where representatives of various organisations, and all the Provincial Congress Committees garlanded him.

Garlanding over, Gandhiji inspected the guard of honour presented by the Seva Dal lady volunteers corps, dressed in their orange-coloured uniforms.

Gandhiji was then taken in a procession to "Mani Bhuvan" in a car decorated with garlands and flags. To his left in the car, was sitting Mr. Vithalbhai Patel, ex-President of the Assembly, who also returned with Gandhiji from Europe.

A fleet of cars carrying the members of the Working Committee and other prominent leaders, followed Gandhiji's car. The procession was headed by the Seva Dal volunteers corps who marched in fours, waving tri-coloured flags, with band and other music. The

road from the gate of the pier to "Mani Bhuvan" was tastefully decorated.

Gandhiji was lustily cheered by the public, who thronged the route. People came from the suburbs and neighbouring towns as early as daybreak and lined the route to have "dharsan" of the Mahatma. Ladies from the balconies showered flowers on Gandhiji when the car passed them.

Gandhiji reached "Mani Bhuvan" at 10-30 a.m. There was a surging crowd of humanity which clamoured for *darshan* of Gandhiji who had to come out every ten minutes to the balcony.

A huge crowd collected on the Laburnam Road in front of the Mani Bhuvan and clamoured for the Mahatma's "dharshan". Gandhiji was at the time pre-occupied with granting interviews to some Liberal leaders. The crowd in the meantime got impatient and insistent, and kept on raising vociferous cheers, and disorder and stampede ensued.

The news that the crowds were getting impatient reached Gandhiji and he came over to the balcony overlooking the street.

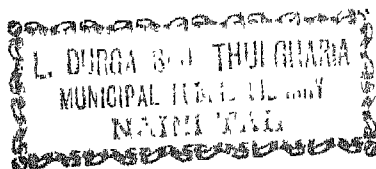
Mahatma Gandhi then stretched his hands and waved the crowds to maintain silence and keep order. The crowds maintained complete silence which enabled Gandhiji to address a few words which were perfectly audible to the large audience.

"Addressing the throng the Mahatma requested the crowds not to wait and waste their valuable time

which they could otherwise engage in the national work. He remarked that he expected to stay among them in Bombay for a day more. He also appealed to the crowds not to make demonstrations or touch his feet as he was driving out to the evening prayer meeting. He humourously observed that he counted himself as an "Untouchable", and, therefore, they should not touch him. "He then asked the crowds to disperse and commanded 'Now, you go home.'"

And the street was soon cleared of the crowds."

THE END.



APPENDIX I.

TRUCE TERMS

The following statement by the Governor-General in Council is published for general information:—

(1) Consequent on the conversations that have taken place between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, it has been arranged that the civil disobedience movement be discontinued and that, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, certain action be taken by the Government of India and Local Governments.

THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

(2) As regards constitutional questions, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations of safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, Defence, External Affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India and the discharge of obligations.

(3) In pursuance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in his Announcement of the 19th of January 1931, steps will be taken for the participation of the representatives of the Congress in the further discussions that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional Reform.

(4) The Settlement relates to activities directly connected with the Civil Disobedience movement.

CALLING OFF OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

(5) Civil disobedience will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by the Government. The effec-

tive discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance thereof by whatever methods pursued and in particular the following: (a) the organised defiance of the provisions of any law, (b) the movement for the non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues, (c) publication of news sheets in support of the Civil Disobedience movement, (d) Attempts to influence civil and military servants or village officials against Government or to persuade them to resign their posts.

BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

(6) As regards the boycott of foreign goods there are two issues involved: firstly the character of the boycott and secondly the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of Government is as follows: They approve of the encouragement of Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement pursued with this object in view which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals, or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of Law and Order. But the boycott of Non-Indian goods (except of cloth, which has been applied to all foreign cloth) has been directed during the Civil Disobedience Movement chiefly if not exclusively against British goods and in regard to these it has been admittedly employed in order to exert pressure for political ends. It is accepted that a boycott of this character, and organised for this purpose, will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian States and of His Majesty's Government and political parties in England which the settlement is intended to secure. It is therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience movement connotes the definite

discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that, in consequence, those who have given up during a time of political excitement the sale or purchase of British goods must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

PICKETING

(7) In regard to the methods employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs, resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public or any offence under the ordinary law. If and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

CONDUCT OF THE POLICE

(8) Mr. Gandhi has drawn the attention of the Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the police and represented the desirability of a public enquiry into them. In the present circumstances, the Government see a great difficulty in this course and feel that it must inevitably lead to charges and counter charges and so militate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter.

CALLING OFF REPRESSION

(9) The action that the Government will take on the discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience movement is stated in the following paragraphs.

(10) Ordinances promulgated in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement will be withdrawn. Ordinance No. 1 of 1931 relating to the terrorist movement does not come within the scope of the provision.

(11) Notifications declaring associations unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 will be withdrawn provided that the notifications were made in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement. The notifications recently issued by the Burma Government under the Criminal Law Amendment Act do not come within the scope of the provision.

(12) Pending prosecutions will be withdrawn if they have been filed in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement and relate to offence which do not involve violence other than technical violence or incitement to such violence, (i) the same principles will apply to proceedings under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, (ii) where a local Government has moved any High Court or has initiated proceedings against the conduct of legal practitioners in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement it will make application to the court concerned for permission to withdraw such proceedings provided that the alleged conduct of the person concerned does not relate to violence or incitement to violence. (iv) Prosecutions if any against soldiers and police involving disobedience of orders will not come within the scope of this provision.

RELEASE OF PRISONERS

(13) (i) Those prisoners will be released who are undergoing imprisonment in connection with the civil disobedience movement for offences which did not involve violence other than technical violence or incitement to such violence. (ii) If any prisoner who comes within the scope of (i) above has been also sentenced for a jail offence not involving violence other than technical violence or incitement to such violence, the latter sentence also will be remitted or if a prosecution relating to an offence of this character is pending against such a prisoner it will be withdrawn. (iii) Soldiers and police convicted of offences involving disobedience of orders in the very few cases

that have occurred will not come within the scope of the amnesty.

(14) Fines which have not been realised will be remitted. Where an order for the forfeiture of security has been made and the security has not been realised it will be similarly remitted. Fines which have been realised and securities forfeited under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code and realised under any law will not be returned.

(15) Additional police imposed in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement at the expense of the inhabitants of a particular area will be withdrawn at the discretion of the Local Governments. Local Governments will not refund any money in excess of the actual cost that has been realised.

RETURN OF MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

(16) (a) Movable property which is not an illegal possession and which has been seized in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement under the Ordinances or the provisions of the Criminal Law will be returned if it is still in the possession of Government; (b) Movable property forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues will be returned unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period, special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulters, while willing to pay genuinely, require time for the purpose and if necessary, the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration; (c) compensation will not be given for deterioration; (d) where movable property has been sold or otherwise finally disposed of by the Government compensation will not be given and the sale proceeds will not be returned except in so far as they are in excess of the legal dues for which

the property may have been sold; (e) it will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the attachment or seizure of property was not in accordance with the law.

(17) (a) Immovable property of which possession has been taken under Ordinance IX, of 1930, will be returned in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance, (b) Land and other immovable property in the possession of Government which has been forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues will be returned unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulter while willing to pay genuinely requires time for the purpose and, if necessary, the revenues will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration, (c) Where immovable property has been sold to third parties the transaction must be regarded as final so far as Government are concerned, (Note): Mr. Gandhi has represented to Government that, according to his information and belief, some at least of these sales have been unlawful and unjust. The Government, on the information before them, cannot accept this contention. (d) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the seizure or attachment of property was not in accordance with the law.

(18) The Government believe that there have been very few cases in which the realisation of dues has not been made in accordance with the provisions of the law. In order to meet such cases, if any, Local Governments will issue instructions to District Officers to have prompt enquiry made into any specific complaint of this nature and to give redress without delay if illegality is established.

POSTS OF INCUMBENTS WHO HAVE RESIGNED

(19) Where the posts rendered vacant by resignations have permanently filled, the Government will not be able to reinstate the late incumbents. Other cases of resignation will be considered on their merits by the Local Governments who will pursue a liberal policy in regard to the reappointment of Government servants and village officials who apply for reinstatement.

MANUFACTURE OF SALT

(20) Government are unable to condone breaches of the existing law relating to the salt administration, nor are they able, in the present financial conditions of the country, to make substantial modifications in the Salt Acts. For the sake, however, of giving relief to certain of the poorer classes they are prepared to extend their administrative provisions on lines already prevailing in certain places in order to permit local residents in villages immediately adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale within such villages but not for sale to or trading with individuals living outside them.

(21) In the event of Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement, Government will take such action as may, in consequence, become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals and the due observance of law and order.

(Sd.) W. EMERSON,

Secretary of the Government of India.

Working Committee's Resolution

The following resolution was passed by the Working Committee of the Congress on 5-3-31.

"The Working Committee having considered the terms of the provisional settlement arrived at between the Government of India and Mr. Gandhi on behalf of the Congress, endorses

them and directs all Congress Committees to take immediate action in accordance with them. The Committee hopes that the country will carry out the terms agreed to in so far as they relate to various Congress activities and is of opinion that on a strict fulfilment of obligations undertaken on behalf of the Congress will depend the advance of India towards Purna Swaraj".

A telegram has been sent accordingly to all Provincial Congress Committees.

Instruction to P. C. C.'S

Dr. Syed Mahmud, General Secretary of the Congress, has wired to all Provincial Congress Committees as follows:—

"In view of the provisional settlement arrived at between the Working Committee on behalf of the Congress and the Government of India, I request you to take immediate steps to inform all Congress Committees in your province to act in accordance with it. Civil Disobedience and No-Tax campaigns are to be discontinued and there should be no further defiance of laws or regulations.

Boycott of British goods as such is to be discontinued and complete freedom regarding them given, but boycott of intoxicating drink and drugs and of all foreign cloth and liquor shops is permitted and should be continued wherever necessary. Such picketing should not be aggressive, and should not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to public or any offence under the ordinary law. If these conditions are not satisfied in any area picketing is to be suspended there. Insistence on Swadeshi goods in preference to all foreign goods is also to be continued.

There should be no organised disobedience of salt laws and no raids, but villagers residing in areas where salt is collected or made are permitted to continue to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale in the neighbourhood, but there

should be no sale or trading outside. Unauthorised news sheets should be stopped.

Tax-payers should prepare for payment of land revenue and return to village where vacated. In cases of economic distress or inability of payment, other methods for remission or suspension should be adopted. In view of the pending release of prisoners, special directions for election of delegates to Karachi Congress are being issued to the Press."

APPENDIX II

The following is the text of Gandhiji's speech at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference :

Prime Minister and friends: Prime Minister, you will extend to me the indulgence of a physically incapable man and *therefore you and this Assembly will please excuse me for my inability to stand up to address you.*

The Chairman : Certainly, Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi : Thank you. I wish that I could have done without having to speak to you but I felt that I would not have been just to you or just to my principle if I did not put in what may be the last word on behalf of the Congress. I live under no illusion.

I do not think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet. Probably the decision has been already taken. Matters of liberty of practically a whole continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation, even negotiations. Negotiations have their purpose and have their play, but only under certain conditions. Without those conditions negotiations are a fruitless task. But I do not want to go into all those matters. I want as far as possible to confine myself within the four corners of the conditions that you, Prime Minister, read to this Conference at its opening meeting. I would, therefore, first of all say a few words in connection with the reports that have been sub-

mitted to this Conference. You will find in these reports that generally it has been stated that so and so is the opinion of a large majority. Some, however, have expressed an opinion to the contrary, and so on. Parties who have dissented have not been stated. I had heard when I was in India and I was told when I came here, that no decision or no decisions will be taken by the ordinary rule of majority, and I do not want to mention this fact here by way of complaint that the reports have been so framed as if the proceedings were governed by the test of majority. But it was necessary for me to mention this fact, because to most of these reports you will find that there is a dissenting opinion, and in most of the cases that dissent unfortunately happens to belong to me. It was not a matter of joy to have to dissent from fellow delegates, but I felt that I could not truly represent the Congress unless I notified that dissent.

There is another thing which I want to bring to the notice of this Conference, namely: what is the meaning of the dissent of the Congress? I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Structure Committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85 per cent of the population of India, that is to say the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went further: that the Congress claimed also by right of service to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasise that claim.

All the other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organisation: it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed; its platform is universal. It may not always have lived up to the creed. I

do not know a single human organisation that lives up to its creed. Congress had failed very often to my knowledge. It may have failed more often to the knowledge of its critics. But the worst critic will have to recognise, as it has been recognised, that the National Congress of India is a daily growing organisation that its message penetrates the remotest village of India; that on given occasions the Congress has been able to demonstrate its influence over and among these masses who inhabit its 700,000 villages.

"A Parallel Government"

And yet here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the Parties. I do not mind it; I do not regard it as a calamity for the Congress; but I do regard it as a calamity for the purpose of doing work for which we have gathered together here. I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers, that the Congress is capable of delivering the goods. The Congress is the only all-India wide national organisation bereft of any communal basis; that it does represent all the minorities which have lodged their claim here and which, or the signatories on their behalf, claim—I hold unjustifiably—to represent 46 per cent of the population of India. The Congress I say claims to represent all these minorities. What a great difference it would be to-day if this claim on behalf of the Congress was recognised. I feel that I have to state this claim with some degree of emphasis on behalf of peace, for the sake of achieving the purpose which is common to all of us, to you Englishmen who sit at this Table and to us the Indian men and women who also sit at this table. I say so for this reason; Congress is a powerful organisation; Congress is an organisation which has been accused of running or desiring to run a parallel Government; and in a way I have endorsed the charge. If you could understand the working of the Congress, you would welcome an organisation which could run pa-

rallel Government and show that it is possible for an organisation, voluntary, without any force at its command, to run the machinery of Government even under adverse circumstances. But no. Although you have invited the Congress you distrust the Congress. Although you have invited the Congress, you reject its claim to represent the whole of India. Of course it is possible at this end of the world to dispute that claim, and it is not possible for me to prove this claim; but all the same, if you find me asserting that claim, I do so because a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders.

The Congress represents the spirit of rebellion. I know that the word "rebellion" must not be whispered at a Conference which has been summoned in order to arrive at an agreed solution of India's troubles through negotiation. Speaker after speaker has got up and said that India should achieve her liberty through negotiation, by argument and that it will be greatest glory of Great Britain if Great Britain yields to India's demands by argument. But the Congress does not hold that view, quite. The Congress has an alternative which is unpleasant to you.

I heard several speakers—and let me say I have endeavoured not to miss a single sitting; I have tried to follow every speaker with the utmost attention and with all the respect that I could possibly give to these speakers—saying what a dire calamity it would be if India was fired with the spirit of lawlessness, rebellion, terrorism and so on. I do not pretend to have read history, but as a school boy I had to pass a paper in history also, and I read that the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know an instance in which nations have attained their own without having to go through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet of the riflemen, the spear and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been upto now used by what I consider blind

lovers of liberty and freedom and the historian has not condemned him. I hold no brief for the terrorists. Mr. Ghuznavi brought in the terrorists and he brought in the Calcutta Corporation. I felt hurt when he mentioned an incident that took place at the Calcutta Corporation. He forgot to mention that the Mayor of that Corporation made handsome reparation for the error into which he himself was betrayed and the error into which the Calcutta Corporation was betrayed through the instrumentality of those members of the Corporation who were Congressmen.

Congress and Terrorism

I hold no brief for Congressmen who directly or indirectly would encourage terrorism. As soon as this incident was brought to the notice of the Congress, the Congress set about putting it in order. It immediately called upon the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation to give an account of what was done and the Mayor, the gentleman that he is, immediately admitted his mistake and made all the reparation that it was then legally possible to make. I must not detain this Assembly over this incident for any length of time. He mentioned also a verse which the children of the forty schools conducted by the Calcutta Corporation are supposed to have recited. There were many other mis-statements in that speech which I could dwell upon, but I have no desire to do so. It is only out of regard for the great Calcutta Corporation and out of regard for truth and on behalf of those who are not here to-night to put in their defence that I mention these two glaring instances. I do not for one moment believe that this was taught in the Calcutta Corporation schools with the knowledge of the Calcutta Corporation. I do know that in those terrible days of last year several things were done for which we have regret, for which we have made reparation. If our boys in Calcutta were taught those verses which Mr. Ghuznavi has recited I am here to tender an apology on their behalf, but I should want it proved

that the boys were taught by the schoolmaster of these schools with the knowledge and encouragement of the Corporation. Charges of this nature have been brought against Congress for times without number, and times without number these charges have also been refuted, but I have mentioned these things at this juncture. It is again to show that for the sake of liberty people have fought, people have lost their lives, people have killed and have sought death at the hands of those whom they have sought to oust. The Congress then comes upon the scene and devises a new method not known to history, namely, that of civil disobedience, and the Congress has been following that method up. But again I am up against a stone wall and I am told that that is a method that no Government in the world will tolerate. Well, of course, the Government may not tolerate, no Government has tolerated open rebellion. No Government may tolerate civil disobedience, but Governments have to succumb even to these forces, as the British Government has done before now, even as the great Dutch Government after eight years of trial had to yield to the logic of facts. General Smuts, a brave General, a great statesman, and a very hard taskmaster also, but he himself recoiled with horror from even the contemplation of doing to death innocent men and women who were merely fighting for the preservation of their self-respect, and the things which he had vowed he would never yield in the year 1908, reinforced as he was by General Botha, he had to do in the year 1914, after having tried these civil resisters through and through. And in India Lord Chelmsford had to do the same thing; the Governor of Bombay had to do the same thing in Bursa and Bardoli. I suggest to you, Prime Minister, it is too late to-day to resist this, and it is this thing which weighs me down, this choice that lies before them, the parting of the ways probably. I shall hope against hope, I shall strain every nerve to achieve an honourable settlement for my country if I can do so without having

to put the millions of my countrymen and countrywomen and even children through this ordeal of fire. It can be a matter of no joy and comfort to me to lead them on again to a fight of that character, but if a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, the country was doing what it felt to be right, and the country will have the additional satisfaction of knowing that it was not at least taking lives, it was giving lives; it was not making the British people directly suffer, it was suffering. Professor Gilbert Murray told me—I shall never forget that—I am paraphrasing his inimitable language. He said: You do not consider for one moment that we Englishmen do not suffer when thousands of your countrymen suffer, that we are so heartless? I do not think so. I do know that you will suffer; but I want you to suffer because I want to touch your hearts; and when your hearts have been touched will come the psychological moment for negotiation. Negotiation there always will be; and if this time I have travelled all these miles in order to enter upon negotiation, I thought that your countryman Lord Irwin had sufficiently tried us through his ordinances, that he had sufficient evidence that thousands of men and women of India and that thousands of children had suffered; and that, ordinance or no ordinance, lathis or no lathis, nothing would avail to stem the tide that was on rushing and to stem the passions that were rising in the breasts of the men and women of India who were thirsting for liberty.

Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you to understand what this Congress stands for. My life is at your disposal. The lives of all the members of the Working Committee, the All-India Congress Committee, are at your disposal. But remember that you have at your disposal the lives of all these dumb millions. I do not want to sacrifice those lives if I can possibly help it. Therefore please remember that I will count no sacrifice

too great if by chance I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like: a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the artificial product. If your mind and the Congress mind, the mind of this Conference and the mind of the British people, means the same thing by the same word, then you will find the amplest room for compromise, and you will find the Congress itself always in a compromising spirit. But so long as there is not that one mind, that one definition, not one implication for the same word that you and I and we may be using, so long there is no compromise possible. How can there be any compromise so long as we each one of us has a different definition for the same words that we may be using. It is impossible, Prime Minister. I want to suggest to you in all humility that it is utterly impossible then to find a meeting ground, where you can apply the spirit of compromise. And I am very grieved to have to say that up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during all these weary weeks.

What is a Dominion?

I was shown last week the Statute of Westminster by a sceptic, and he said: "Have you seen the definition of "Dominion". I read the definition of "Dominion", and naturally I was not at all perplexed or shocked to see that the word "Dominion" was exhaustively defined, and it had not a general definition but a particular definition. It simply said: the word "Dominion" shall include Australia, South Africa Canada and so on ending with the Irish Free State. I do not think I noticed Egypt there. Then he said: "Do you see what your Dominion means?" It did not make any impression upon me. I do not

mind what my Dominion means or what complete independence means. In a way I was relieved.

I said I am now relieved from having to quarrel about the word "dominion", because I am out of it. But I want complete independence, and even so, so many Englishmen have said "Yes, you can have complete independence, but what is the meaning of complete independence?", and again we come to different definitions. Therefore I say the Congress claim is registered as complete independence.

One of your great statesmen—I do not think I should give his name—was debating with me, and he said 'Honestly I did not know that you meant this by complete independence.' He ought to have known but he did not know. I shall tell you what he did not know. When I said to him "I cannot be a partner in an Empire," he said "Of course, that is logical." I said "But I want to become that. It is not as if I shall be if I am compelled to, but I want to become a partner with Great Britain. I want to become a partner with the English people; but I want to enjoy precisely the same liberty that your people enjoy, and I want to seek this partnership not merely for the benefit of India, and not merely for mutual benefit; I want to seek this partnership in order that the great weight that is crushing the World to atoms may be lifted from its shoulders."

This took place ten or twelve days ago, strange as it may appear, I got a note from another Englishman whom also you know and whom also you respect. Among many things, he writes, "I believe profoundly that the peace and happiness of mankind depend on our friendship" and, as if I would not understand that, he says "your people and mine." I must read to you what he also says "And of all Indians you are the one that the real Englishman likes and understands."

He does not waste any words on flattery, and I do not think he has intended this last expression to flatter me. It will not

flatter me in the slightest degree. There are many things in this note which, if I could share them with you, would perhaps make you understand better the significance of this expression, but let me tell you that when he writes this last sentence he does not mean me personally. I personally signify nothing, and I know I would mean nothing to any single Englishman, but I mean something to some Englishmen because I represent a cause, because I seek to represent a nation, a great organisation which has made itself felt. That is the reason why he says this.

"It is Friendship I Crave"

But, then, if I could possibly find that working basis, Prime Minister, there is ample room for compromise. It is friendship I crave. My business is not to throw overboard the slave holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so and to-day the Congress has accepted that philosophy not as a creed, as it is to me, but as a policy, because the Congress believes that it is the right and best thing for India, a nation of 350,000,000, to do.

A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the poison bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say No and that nation is to-day learning to say No.

But what is it that that nation does? To summarily or at all to dismiss Englishmen? No. It's mission is to-day to convert Englishmen. I do not want to break the bond between England and India but I do want to transform that bond. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country. Call it complete independence or whatever you like, I will not quarrel about that word, and even though my countrymen may dispute with me for having taken some other word, I shall be able to bear down that opposition so long as the content of the word that you may suggest to me bears the same

meaning. Hence I have times without number to urge upon your attention that the safeguards that have been suggested are completely unsatisfactory. They are not in the interests of India.

Three experts from the Federation of Commerce and Industry have in their own manner, each in his different manner, told out of their expert experience how utterly impossible it is for any body of responsible Ministers to tackle the problem of administration when 80 per cent of her resources are mortgaged irretrievably. Better than I could have shown to you they have shown out of the amplitude of their knowledge what these financial safeguards mean for India. They mean the Complete cramping of India. They have discussed at this table financial safeguards but that includes necessarily the question of Defence and the question of the Army. Yet while I say that the safeguards are unsatisfactory as they have been presented I have not hesitated to say, and I do not hesitate to repeat that the Congress is pledged to giving safeguards, endorsing safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India.

At one of the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee I had no hesitation in amplifying the admission and saying that these safeguards must be also of benefit to Great Britain. I do not want safeguards which are merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain. The fancied interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of Great Britain will also have to be sacrificed. Therefore again, I repeat if we have the same meaning for the same word, I will agree with Mr. Jayakar, with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other distinguished speakers who have spoken at this Conference.

I will agree with them all that we have after all, after all these labours, reached a substantial measure of agreement, but my despair, my grief, is that I do not read the same words in the same light. The implications of the safeguards of Mr. Jayakar I very much fear are different from my implications, and the implications of Mr. Jayakar and myself are perhaps only different from the implications that Sir Samuel Hoare, for instance, has in mind; I do not know. We have never really come to grips. We have never come to brass tacks as you put it, and I am anxious—I have been pining—to come to real grips and to brass tacks all these days and all these nights, and I have felt: why are we not coming nearer and nearer together, and why are we wasting our time in eloquence, in oratory, in debating, and in scoring points? Heaven knows, I have no desire to hear my own voice. Heaven knows I have no desire to take part in any debating. I know that liberty is made of sterner stuff and I know that the freedom of India is made of much sterner stuff. We have problems that would baffle any statesman. We have problems that other nations have not to tackle. But they do not baffle me; they cannot baffle those who have been brought up in the Indian climate. Those problems are there with us. Just as we have to tackle our bubonic plague, we have to tackle the problem of malaria. We have to tackle, as you have not, the problem of snakes and scorpions, monkeys, tigers and lions. We have to tackle these problems because we have been brought up under them. They do not baffle us. Somehow or other we have survived the ravages of these venomous reptiles and various creatures. So also shall we survive our problem and find a way out of those problems. But to-day you and we have come together at a Round Table and we want to find a common formula which will work. Please believe me that whilst I abate not a little of the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, which I do not pro-

pose to repeat here, while I withdraw not one word of the speeches that I had to make at the Federal Structure Committee, I am here to compromise; I am here to consider every formula that British ingenuity can prepare every formula that the ingenuity of such constitutionalists as Mr. Sastri, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Mahomed Shafi and a host of other constitutionalists can weave into being.

I will not be baffled. I shall be here as long as I am required because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at at Delhi into a permanent settlement (Applause). But for Heaven's sake give me, a frail man, 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organisation that he represents. You distrust that organisation though you may seemingly trust me. *Do not for one moment differentiate me from the organisation of which I am but a drop in the ocean.* I am no greater than the organisation to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organisation; and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save what I derived from the Congress if you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then you will say goodbye to terrorism; then you will not need terrorism. To-day you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there with your disciplined and organised terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood? Will you not see that we do not want bread made of wheat, but we want bread of liberty; and without that liberty there are thousands to-day who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace.

"The Writing on the Wall"

I urge you then to read that writing on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially

patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Mussalman also by contact good or evil with the Hindu has himself become mild. And that mention of the Mussalman brings me to the baffling problem of Minorities. Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India—I have not forgotten those words—that without the problem of Minorities being solved there is no Swaraj for India, there is no freedom for India. I know that; I realise it; and yet I came here in the hope perchance that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connection with the Minorities problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution; there will be no living friendship between these communities. It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing?

Were Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Mussalmans in the villages are not even to-day quarrelling. In these days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Mahomed Ali often used to tell me and he was himself a bit of an historian. He said: "If God"—"Allah" as he called God—"gives me life, I propose to write the history of Mussalman rule in India; and then I will show through documents that British people have preserved that Aurangazeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian; that the Mogul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British

history; and so on. And so have Hindu historians written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say it is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship, between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership, to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, untouchables, will all live together as one man.

I want to say one word about the Princes, and I shall have done. I have not said much about the Princes, nor do I intend to say much to-night about the Princes, but I should be wronging them and I should be wronging the Congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table Conference but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India. and therefore I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India, and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements—only elements—of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the world and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit that they do not want to remain undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is.

The Frontier Province

Sir a note has been placed in my hands by my friend Sir Abdul Qaiyum, and he says, will not I say one word about the Frontier Province. I will, and it is this. Let India get what she is entitled to and what she can really take, but whatever she gets whenever she gets it, let the Frontier Province get complete autonomy to-day. That Frontier will then be a standing demonstration to the whole of India, and therefore the whole vote of the Congress will be given in favour of the Frontier Province getting provincial autonomy to-morrow. Prime Minister, if you can possibly get your Cabinet to endorse the proposition that from to-morrow the Frontier Province becomes a full fledged autonomous province I shall then have a proper footing amongst the Frontier tribes and convene them to my assistance when those over the border cast an evil eye on India.

Last of all, my last is a pleasant task for me. This is perhaps the last time that I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want to sit at the same table with you in your closets and to negotiate and to plead with you and to go down on bended knee before I take the final leap and final plunge. But whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-operation or not does not depend upon me. It largely depends upon you. But it may not even depend upon you. It depends upon so many circumstances over which neither you nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all from Their Majesties down to the poorest men in the East End where I have taken up my habitation.

In that settlement which represents the poor people of the East End of London I have become one of them. They have accepted me as a member, and as a favoured member of their family. It will be one of the richest treasures that I shall carry with me. Here too I have found nothing but courtesy and noth-

ing but a genuine affection from all with whom I have come in touch. I have come in touch with so many Englishmen. It has been a priceless privilege to me. They have listened to what must have often appeared to them to be unpleasant, although it was true. Although I have often been obliged to say these things to them they have never shown the slightest impatience or irritation. It is impossible for me to forget these things. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this Round Table Conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me—that is, that from high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and the utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection. (Applause) It has enhanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature that although Englishmen and Englishwomen have been led upon lies so often that I see disfiguring your Press, that although in Lancashire the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation and no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me. They treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friends. I do not know them but I read that affection in their eyes as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance." (Applause).

APPENDIX III

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD'S SPEECH

The following is the text of the Premier's closing speech delivered at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference :

The Premier said :

We have now had two sessions of the Round Table Conference and the time has come to survey the important work

which has been done first of all in setting out the problems. which in the task of Indian constitution-building we have to surmount and then in trying to find how to surmount them. The reports presented to us now bring our co-operation to the end of another stage and we must pause and study what has been done and the obstacles which we have encountered and the best ways and means of bringing our work to a successful end as rapidly as possible.

"I regard our discussions and our personal contact here as of the highest value and make bold to say that they have raised the problem of Indian constitutional reform far above the mere technicalities of constitution-making, for, we have won that confidence in and respect for each other, which has made the task one of helpful political co-operation. That, I am confident, will continue to the end. By co-operation alone can we succeed.

2. "At the beginning of the year, I made a declaration of the policy of the then Government and I am authorised by the present one to give you and India a specific assurance, that it remains their policy. I shall repeat the salient sentences of that declaration.

"The view of His Majesty's Government is, that responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon the legislatures. Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during the period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances and also with such guarantees as are required by the Minorities to protect their political liberties and rights. In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period it will be the primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India

through the new constitution to full Responsibility for her own Government.

3. "With regard to Central Government, I made it plain that subject to defined conditions. His Majesty's late Government were prepared to recognise the principle of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature if both were constituted on an All-India Federal basis.

"The principle of Responsibility was to be subject to the qualification, that, in the existing circumstances, Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General and that, in regard to Finance, such conditions must apply as would ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State and the maintenance, unimpaired, of the financial stability and credit of India.

4. "Finally, it was our view that the Governor-General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him to fulfil his responsibility for securing the observance of the constitutional rights of minorities and for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State.

5. "These were, in broad outline, the features of the new constitution for India, as contemplated by His Majesty's Government at the end of the last Conference.

6. "As I say, my colleagues in His Majesty's present Government fully accept that statement of January last as representing their own policy. In particular, they desire to reaffirm their belief in an All-India Federation as offering the only hopeful solution of India's constitutional problem. They intend to pursue this plan unswervingly and to their utmost to surmount the difficulties which now stand in the way of its realisation.

"In order to give this declaration the fullest authority, the statement which I am now making to you, will be circulated to-

day as a White Paper to both Houses of Parliament and the Government will ask Parliament to approve it this week.

"The Difficulties"

7. "The discussions which have been proceeding during the past two months have been of value in showing us more precisely the problems we have to solve and have advanced us towards the solution of them. But they have also made it plain that others still require further examination and co-operative consideration. There is still difference of opinion, for instance, as to the composition of powers of the Federal Legislature and I regret that owing to the absence of a settlement of the key question of how to safeguard the Minorities under a Responsible Central Government, the Conference has been unable to discuss effectively the nature of the Federal Executive and its relationship with the Legislature. Again, it has not yet been possible for the States to settle amongst themselves their place in the Federation and their mutual relationship within it. Our common purpose will not be advanced by ignoring these facts nor by assuming that the difficulties they present will somehow solve themselves.

"Further Discussions Required"

"Further thought, discussion and reconciliation of different interests and points of view are still required before we can translate the broad general aims into the detailed machinery of a workable constitution. I am not saying this to indicate the impossibility of nor to foreshadow any pause in our work. I only wish to remind you that we have put our hands to a task which demands alike from His Majesty's Government and from the leaders of Indian opinion care, courage, and time, lest, when the work is done, it may bring confusion and disappointment and, instead of opening the way to political progress, may effectively bar it. We must build like good craftsmen well and truly. Our duty to India demands that from all of us.

8. "What then is the general position in which we find ourselves as regards a practical programme for the advancement of our common aims? I want no more general declarations which carry us no further in our work. The declarations already made and repeated to-day are enough to give confidence in the purpose of the Government and to provide work for the Committees to which I shall refer. I want to keep to business. The great idea of an All-India Federation still holds the field. The principle of a responsible Federal Government subject to certain reservations and safeguards through the transitional period remains unchanged. And we are all agreed that the Governor's provinces of the future are to be responsibly-governed units enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation in carrying out their own policies in their own sphere.

Future of Frontier Province

9. "I should explain at once in connection with that the last point that we contemplate as one feature of the new order that the North-West Frontier Province should be constituted a Governor's Province, but with due regard to the necessary requirements of the Frontier and that, as in all other Governor's provinces, the powers entrusted to the Governor to safeguard the safety and tranquillity of the Province shall be real and effective.

Sind to be Separate Province

10. His Majesty's Government also accept, in principle, the proposition which was endorsed at the last Conference that Sind should be constituted a separate Province if a satisfactory means of financing it can be found. We, therefore, intend to ask the Government of India to arrange for a conference with the representatives of Sind for the purpose of trying to overcome

the difficulties disclosed by the report of the expert financial investigation which has just been completed.

“Federation not to be achieved in a Month”

11. But I have digressed from the question of a programme in the light of the accepted factors—Federation as the aim and self-governing provinces and the Indian States as its basis. As I have said, our discussions have made it clear to all of us that a Federation cannot be achieved in a month or two. There is a mass of difficult constructive work still to be done and there are important agreements to be sought by which the structure must be shaped and cemented.

“It is equally plain that the framing of a scheme of Responsible Government for the Provinces would be a simpler task which could be more speedily accomplished. The adjustments and modifications of the powers now exercised by the Central Government which would obviously have to be made in order to give real Self-Government to the Provinces should raise no insuperable difficulties. It has, therefore, been pressed upon the Government that the surest and speediest route to a Federation would be to get these measures in train forthwith and not to delay the assumption of full responsibility by the Provinces a day longer than is necessary. But it is clear that a partial advance does not commend itself to you. (Applause.) You have indicated your desire that no change should be made in the constitution which is not effected by one all-embracing statute covering the whole field and His Majesty’s Government have no intention of urging a responsibility, which, for whatever reasons, is considered at the moment premature or ill-advised. It may be that opinion and circumstances will change and it is not necessary here and now to take any irrevocable decision.

“We intend and have always intended to press on with all possible despatch with the Federal plan.

"It would clearly be indefensible, however, to allow the present decision to stand in the way of the earliest possible constitutional advance in the North-West Frontier Province. We intend therefore to take the necessary steps as soon as may be apply to the North-West Frontier Province, until the new constitutions are established, the provisions of the present Act relating to Governor's Provinces.

The Communal Question

12. "We must all, however, realise that there stands in the way of progress, whether for the Provinces or the Centre, that formidable obstacle, the communal deadlock. I have never concealed from you my conviction that this is, above all others, a problem for you to settle by agreement amongst yourselves. The first of the privileges and the burdens of a self-governing people is to agree how the democratic principle of representation is to be applied, or, in other words, who are to be represented and how it is to be done. This Conference has twice essayed this task. Twice it has failed. I cannot believe that you will demand that we shall accept these failures as final and conclusive.

13. "But time presses. We shall soon find that our endeavours to proceed with our plans are held up (indeed they have been held up already).

"If you cannot present us with a settlement acceptable to all parties as the foundations upon which to build, in that event His Majesty's Government would be compelled to a provisional scheme, for they are determined that even this disability shall not be permitted to be a bar to progress.

"This would mean that His Majesty's Government would have to settle for you not only your problems of representation, but also to decide as wisely and justly as possible, what checks and balances the constitution is to contain to protect the minori-

ties from an unrestricted and tyrannical use of the democratic principle expressing itself solely through the majority power. I desire to warn you that if the Government have to supply, even temporarily, this part of your constitution which you are unable to supply for yourselves and, through it will be our care to provide the most ample safeguards for minorities, so that none of them need feel that they have been neglected, it will not be a satisfactory way of dealing with this problem.

"Let me also warn you that if you cannot come to an agreement on this amongst yourselves it will add considerably to the difficulties of any Government here which shares our views of an Indian constitution and it will detract from the place which that constitution will occupy amongst those of the other nations. I, therefore, beg of you once more to take further opportunities to meet together and present us with an agreement.

14. "We intend to go ahead. We have now brought our business down to specific problems, which require close and intimate consideration, first of all by bodies which are really Committees and not unwieldy conferences and we must now set up machinery to do this kind of work.

"Working Committee of Conference"

"As that is being done and conclusions presented we must be able to continue consultations with you. I propose, therefore, with your consent to nominate in due course a small representative Committee—a Working Committee of this Conference—which will remain in being in India, with which, through the Viceroy, we can keep in effective touch. I cannot here and now specify precisely how this Committee can best be employed. This is a matter which must be worked out, and must, to some extent, depend on the reports of the Committees we propose to set up. But in the end we shall have to meet again for a final review of the whole scheme.

"The plan in a word is this. I would like you to carry it in your mind that these two sessions have provided now a mass of details. You have sketched out in a general way the kind of constitution you want. Then, you have said, 'This wing of it, has not yet been drawn in detail by any architect' and we now have to consider the stresses upon the fabric—the best way to protect it, to safeguard it and to carry it. With that material in front of us we appoint this Committee, that Committee and other Committees to study the matter and to produce proposals for us for dealing with them. That is what you would call the detailed work that must be pursued.

"And you know perfectly well, my friends, that a Conference as large as this or a Committee as large as some of those Committees that have been meeting under the Chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor cannot do that work. There are too many long speeches. (Laughter.) There are too many written speeches. There is not enough intimate, practical and pointed exchange of view sharp across a table, without ten minutes speeches—two seconds observations met by another two seconds observations. Only in that way are you going to work it out. But whilst this is being done, we have to keep in contact with what I would call the large, representative political body—a body of this nature, a body which this typifies. That is the plan, the conception of His Majesty's Government—of quick, effective, scientific and certain work in the building up of the great constitution of India, to which reference has been made.'

15 "It is our intention to set up at once the Committees whose appointment the Conference has recommended viz.,

(A) To investigate and advise on their revision of the franchise and constituencies.

(B) To put to the test of detailed budgetary facts and figures the recommendations of the Federal Finance Subcommittee and

(C) to explore more fully the specific financial problems arising in connection with certain individual states.

"We intend that these Committees shall be at work in India under the Chairmanship of distinguished public men from this country as early in the new year as possible. The views expressed by you here on the other outstanding Federal problems will be taken into consideration at once and the necessary steps taken to get better understanding and agreement upon them.

16. "His Majesty's Government have also taken note of the suggestion made in paragraph 26 of the Federal Structure Committee's third report with the object of facilitating an early decision on the distribution among the states of whatever quota may be agreed upon for their representations in the legislature.

"It follows from what I have already said that they share the general desire for an early agreement on this question among the States and His Majesty's Government intend to afford the Princes all possible assistance by way of advice in this matter. If it appears to the Government that there is likely to be undue delay in their reaching an agreement amongst themselves the Government will take such steps as seem helpful to obtain a working settlement.

Safeguards for Minorities

17. "I have already alluded to another matter to which you have given ample evidence that you attach great importance, and to which you will expect me to refer. A decision of the communal problem, which provides only for representation of the communities in the legislatures is not enough to secure what I may call 'natural rights'. When such provisions have been made the minorities will still remain minorities and the constitution must therefore contain provisions which will give all creeds and classes a due sense of security that the principle of Majority Government is not to be employed to their moral or

material disadvantages in the body politic. The Government cannot undertake here and now to specify in detail what those provisions should be. Their form and scope will need the most anxious and careful consideration with a view to ensuring on the one hand that they are reasonably adequate for their purpose and on the other that they do not encroach to an extent which amounts to stultification upon the principles of representative Responsible Government.

"In this manner the Committee of Consultation should play an important part, for here also, just as in regard to the method and proportions of electoral representation, it is vital to the success of the new constitution that it should be framed on a basis of mutual agreement.

18. "Now, once again, we must say each other goodbye.

"For a time we shall meet individually and we shall meet, I hope, on committees carrying on this work to which we have set our hands. Not 'we' in the sense of His Majesty's Government, but 'we' in the sense of you and us together.

"Great strides have been made; greater, I am sure you will find, than the most optimistic think. I was glad to hear, in the course of these debates speaker after speaker taking that view. It is the true view.

"These Conferences have not been failures in any sense of the term. These Conferences had to meet. These Conferences had to come up against obstacles. These Conferences had to be the means by which the diversity of opinion had to be expressed. These Conferences enabled us not only to mobilise the goodwill of India and England, but also enabled us to mobilise the great problems, the historical problems, of India. These problems have enabled us all, you and we together, to come down and face hard reality and to gather from mutual conference the spirit and the determination to overcome difficulties.

"We have met with obstacles but one of those optimists, to whom humanity owes most of its progress, said that "obstacles were made to be overcome." In that buoyancy of spirit and the goodwill which comes from it, let us go on with our task. My fairly wide experience of the Conferences like this is that the road to agreements is very broken and littered with obstructions to begin with and the first stages often fill one with despair. But quite suddenly and generally unexpectedly the way smoothes itself out and the end is happily reached. I not only pray that such may be our experience, but I assure you that the Government will strive unceasingly to secure such a successful termination to our mutual labours."

Vote of thanks to Premier

After the Premier's speech, Mr. Gandhi proposed a vote of thanks to the chair.

He said that he did so with the greatest pleasure. It would not be expected of any of them and, least of all, of him to comment on the weighty pronouncement of the Chairman. He had a double duty, one to conduct the Conference and the other to convey the decisions of His Majesty's Government. It was more pleasant to Mr. Gandhi to refer to the first duty. He congratulated the Chairman on the lessons he had given them in time since he would try to pass that lesson on to his countrymen. The Prime Minister had shown amazing industry and worked to exhaustion old men like Pandit Malaviya, Mr. Sastri and himself. "Therefore I have the greatest pleasure in moving a vote of thanks."

"But there is an additional reason, and it is perhaps the greater reason," Gandhiji continued, "why I should shoulder this responsibility and the esteem and the privilege that have been given to me.

"It is somewhat likely—I would say only somewhat likely because I would like to study your declaration once, twice,

thrice and as often as may be necessary, scanning every word thereof and reading the hidden meaning in it, crossing all the T's and dotting all the I's—and if I then come to the conclusion, as just now seems likely—that, as far as I am concerned, we have come to the parting of the ways and that our ways take different directions, it does not matter to us. Even so, you are entitled to my hearty and sincerest vote of thanks.

“We must face the storms of Life”

“It is not given to us always to expect a meticulous regard for each other's opinions and always be accommodating so that there is no principle left. On the contrary the dignity of human nature requires that we must face the storms of life. Sometimes even blood brothers have to go each his own way, but if at the end of their quarrel, at the end of their differences, they can say that they bore no malice and that even so they acted as becomes a gentleman, a soldier, if it be possible at the end of the chapter for me to say that of myself and my countrymen and if it is possible for me to say that of you, Mr. Prime Minister, and of your countrymen, I will say that we parted also well.

“I do not know in what directions my path will lie, but it does not matter to me. Even then, although I may have to go in an exactly opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from the bottom of my heart.” (Loud applause.)

Sir A. Qaiyum

Sir Abdul Qaiyum, seconding, confessed that he was overwhelmed by the announcement of the fate of his province and in view of the honour of seconding the vote, his happiness was unbounded. He sincerely and heartily supported the vote. The Premier's statement on behalf of the Government was quite satisfactory to him and though every delegate might not be satisfied, there was one from the far off corner of India who was quite satisfied with the fate of his own province. (Applause.)

Sir Abdul Qayyum expressed his gratitude to the Government and all the members of the Conference for the announcement. He said that he hoped that the best interpretation would be placed on the words "with due regard to the requirement for the defence of the frontier" and that they would be allowed even if they occasionally committed mistakes, every opportunity of acquiring experience of the new constitution.

H. H. The Nawab of Bhopal

The whole-hearted support of the Princes to the vote was expressed by the Nawab of Bhopal who assured full co-operation of the States with the British Government and British India in the noble task of creating a Greater India. The Princes were very grateful to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor and Sir S. Hoare for the courtesy, kindness and goodwill. They were grateful to every Englishman for the hospitality of England. They were carrying back the happiest memories and hoped they would soon meet again, perhaps this time in India. The Conference had strengthened the indissoluble links uniting the two countries.

The Premier's Reply

The Prime Minister, replying to the vote, said that he was deeply touched by the warmth of the reception. His old friends knew perfectly well how close to his heart India and her people lay. He would feel very happy, if, when he retired from active life, a settlement between India and British had been reached that would make India content and give reason to the British people to be proud of their capacity to handle the very delicate subject and cement for all time the finest and most spontaneous friendship between India and Britain.

"Go by the Path of Goodwill"

The Premier hoped that they were going away determined to co-operate. It was no "good going on any other path. "The path

of reason and mutual goodwill of the two peoples uniting to take the road to aim which we now profess together to have in common is the path of the future, whatever may have been the path of the past."

The Premier said that he was much obliged for Gandhiji's kind and friendly words and continued that there was only one thing to quarrel with him. "Why does he refer to himself in relation to me as an old man? (Laughter). The Mahatmaji has got years to his advantage. It was a young man who spoke at twelve last night. (Laughter). It was an old man in the chair. I do not know which of us looks older, but the records show that in the ordinary course of nature I am much nearer the end of my time than Gandhiji himself and if there is anybody who has got a grievance about prolonged sitting, it is not the young man who spoke. It is the old man who presided whom you kept out of bed until 2-30 in the morning and then made to get up at 6 a.m., in order to come here with a prepared statement. That is where the grievance is, but here I have none, not a particle, not a shadow, if it has been in the interests of India."

I am so glad my old friend, Sir Abdul Qaiyum, seconded the resolution. It was a great achievement to get Mr. Gandhi and him together. That is a foretaste of what is going to happen (applause) when the Muslim and the Hindu (Mr. Gandhi interjected, "not Hindu.")

The Chairman said: Mr. Gandhi understands the lapses of the untrained human tongue.

Mr. Gandhi: I forgive it.

The Chairman: He understands lapses of the untrained human tongue such as mine, Mussalmans and others (laughter and applause) together. I am beginning to pick up Mr. Gandhi's thoughts, because he has always told us that you were sections and he comprehended you all.

Mr. Gandhi: Of course

